

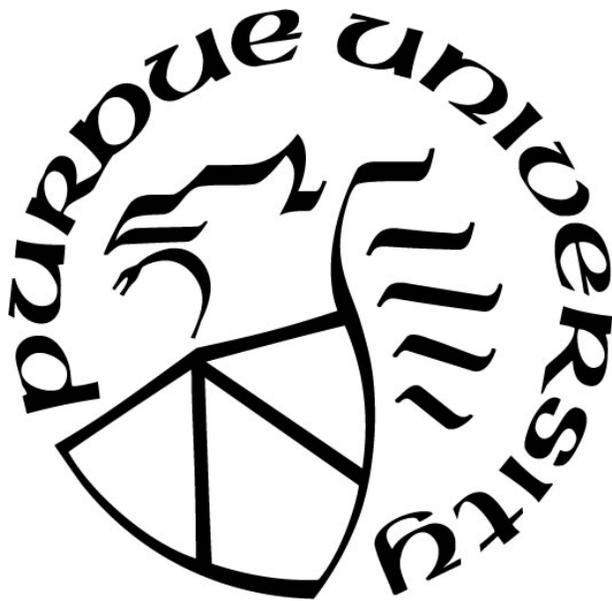
**GOD'S PRESERVATIONISTS: THE CHAMPIONING OF CONFORMITY
IN INTERREGNUM ENGLAND, 1649-1660**

by
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A Dissertation

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To my Grandparents, Margaret and Patrick, and my uncles, Paul and John. Whose tales of the past influenced my pursuit of historical writing and teaching.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BL	The British Library, King's Cross, London
BL Add Ms	The British Library Additional Manuscripts
Bodl.	Bodleian Library
Bodl. MSS. J. Walker	John Walker Collection
CCED	The Clergy of the Church of England Database
CLSP	Clarendon State Papers manuscripts, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
CSP Dom	M. Everett Green (ed.), <i>Calendar of state papers: domestic series. Commonwealth, 1649-1660</i> (London: Longman and co and Truber and co, 1875-1886).
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
DRO	Derbyshire Record Office
ERO, Q/SR	Essex Record Office
<i>Josselin</i>	Alan Macfarlane (ed.), <i>The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
LUL	Leicester University Library
NRO	Norfolk Record Office
ODNB	Collin Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., <i>The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford, 60 vols., 2004).
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London.

CONVENTIONS

All grammar, spelling and punctuation from the original sources have been modernized to facilitate reading of narratives. Proper names for people and places have been capitalized according to modern convention.

All reference to seventeenth-century dating is Old Style, but with the new year taken to begin on 1 January. If there is the possibility of confusion between the publication date of works and the dating of events, an explanation is included in the footnote.

Where possible, I have elected to avoid using “Anglicanism,” “Anglican Church” and “Anglican” as they are anachronistic to the seventeenth-century in the way that we use them today.

ABSTRACT

Author: Lawlor, Pádraig. PhD

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Title: God's Preservationists: The Championing of Conformity in Interregnum England,
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Committee Chair: Melinda S. Zook

This dissertation examines the preservation of the Church of England in Interregnum England. It incorporates a microhistorical analysis of parish life in four Puritanical counties located in East Anglia, namely Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. In the current historiography on the Church of England, scholars of religious history have traditionally associated both Puritan and sectarian activity with the political upheaval, religious reform, and the collapse of cultural norms that accompanied the English Interregnum. Absent from this scholarship, however, are the voices and actions of those devoted parishioners who refused to abandon their parish church after its disestablishment in 1649. These followers, henceforth called “Conformists,” both fostered and maintained a shared cultural system that stabilized their communal interaction in a period exemplified by politico-religious chaos. In a period characterized by bloody conflicts, their instruments were not swords, but sermons. Thus, this project reveals that the perseverance of Conformists amid the persecution of Cromwellian England was not arbitrary, but a disciplined reaction in which spiritual guidance was actively sought and developed. Central to this response were the actions of sequestered Conformist ministers who guided their displaced congregations by administering forbidden sacraments and emboldening communal engagement.

INTRODUCTION

I went with my Wife to London to celebrate Christmas day Sermon Ended, as he giving us the holy Sacrament, the Chapel was surrounded with Souldiers: All the Communicants and Assembly surprised & kept Prisoners by them, some in the house, others carried away . . . These wretched miscreants, held their muskets against us as we came up to receive the Sacred Elements, as if they would have shot us at the Altar.

- 25 December 1657¹

The above plaintive account by diarist John Evelyn is representative of the suffering of “Prayer Book Protestants” under the Puritan commonwealth. It is a testimony not only to the continued controversy that the Book of Common Prayer provoked but also to the repression experienced by the suppressed Church of England. Evelyn’s melancholy account also suggests that it was easier for Parliament to eradicate the Prayer Book from churches in 1645 than it was to uproot it from the people’s affections. The *Directory for Public Worship of God*, which replaced the Prayer Book, was less of a compendium of prayers than a directive of piety, and therefore designed for clerical, not congregational, use.² Indeed, the Directory was never popular, and seems to have been adopted only in a minority of parishes.³ Prayer Book services, especially regarding the burial of the dead, often recited from memory, was persistently employed throughout the Interregnum.

Whereas Evelyn’s account reflects the surreal nature with which the church experienced, Suffolk native and essayist Owen Felltham’s efforts to circumnavigate parliamentary ordinances

¹ John Evelyn, “The Diary of John Evelyn,” in *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 2 vols. ed. William Bray (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1902), 1:319. Evelyn’s correspondence and letters are located at: BL, corresp., notes, and papers, Add. MSS 15948, 15950.

² *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1645); Judith D. Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (London: Cambridge, 2000), 60; John Morrill, “The Church in England, 1642-9,” in *Reactions to the English Civil War, 1642-1649*, ed. John Morrill (New York, 1982), 103-108.

³ Janet Clare, *From Republic to Restoration: Legacies and Departures* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 135.

reveal a more pragmatic approach to preservation.⁴ In the late 1650s, Felltham penned his essay *A form of prayer compos'd for the family of the Right Honourable, the countess of Thomond*. The guide, long believed to be a Restoration document, was re-dated to the Interregnum when the existence of three copies of the 1661 folio of *Resolves* containing *A Form of Prayer* surfaced in the 1980s.⁵ *A Form of Prayer* was thus revealed to be a modified version of the Church of England's morning and evening prayer services designed to evade the letter of the 1645 Act of Parliament.⁶ Written out of necessity and entrenched in the political and religious context of the Interregnum, it stands as the embodiment of an attempt to preserve the Prayer Book of the Church of England. Nestled within Felltham's musings concerning morality and conscience is his clear dismay at the 1645 decree's forbiddance of the use of the Book of Common Prayer in private services. He remarked:

The form of prayer that is here extant, being such as was made use of, when the liturgy of the church was as the church itself, in the Revelation, forced to flee into the wilderness; and perhaps, somewhat more appropriated to the conditions of a private family, than that appointed for the church, in public; he confesses to have willingly published, not to obtrude it upon any; but that if any like it (as some have done) they might not want a form to invite them to so necessary a duty.⁷

The document is a sharp reminder of the struggles experienced by the repressed Church of England, perhaps best perceived in the case of Barnabas O' Brien, Fifth Earl of Thomond, and his family. The O'Brien clan is one of several families which sought to preserve their religiosity in

⁴ *An Ordinance for taking away the Book of Common Prayer, and for establishing and putting in the execution of the Directory for the publique worship of God* (London, 1645).

⁵ Owen Felltham, *Resolves, Divine, Moral and Political* (London, 1661); one of these copies is in the Reading University Library (shelf-mark: 828.4 Folio Reserve), the other in the Sydney Jones Library of the University of Liverpool (shelf-mark: Y66.5.23), and the third copy containing "A Form of Prayer" is located in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC., (call number: F655b).

⁶ Ted-Larry Pebworth, "An Anglican Family Worship Service of the Interregnum: A Canceled Early Text and a New Edition of Owen Felltham's 'A Form of Prayer,'" *English Literary Renaissance*, 16 (1986), 206 – 233.

⁷ Owen Felltham, *A form of prayer compos'd for the family of the Right Honourable, the countess of Thomond* (London: 1657-9), i.

this period.⁸ Rather than attending their local public Presbyterian observance at St. Andrew's, Great Billing, Northamptonshire, the family held their services in their manor house. Among those in attendance was the aforementioned English poet, Owen Felltham, who left London in 1628 to serve as the steward on O'Brien's estate.⁹ Felltham, either at the family's encouragement or on his own accord, composed his Royalist "Form of Prayer" to evade the letter of the Act of Parliament prohibiting the use of the Book of Common Prayer in family worship.¹⁰ Felltham and the O'Brien family clearly found the law profoundly frustrating as is evident in his prefatory statement, "The Form of Prayer was made use of when the Liturgy of the Church was forced to flee into the wilderness."¹¹ Felltham was of the laity, in no danger of losing his employment should he continue to use the Book of Common Prayer. However, the O'Brien family had much to lose if they openly disobeyed an act of Parliament: five pounds for the first offense, ten pounds for the second violation, and if a third offense, a year's imprisonment.¹² Nonetheless, the preservation of their religion superseded any fear of the penalties imposed by the new government.¹³

Following the execution of King Charles I in January 1649, England's political regime changed no fewer than five times with several minor revolutions before the Restoration of his son and heir, Charles II, in 1660.¹⁴ Between these two periods rests the Interregnum, a decade shaped

⁸ H. C. Hamilton, E. G. Atkinson and R. P. Mahaffy, eds., *Calendar of the state papers relating to Ireland*, 24 vols. (London, 1860–1910), 3:245, 3:387, 3:454; J. Hogan, *Letters and papers relating to the Irish rebellion between 1642–46* (Dublin: The Stationery Office, 1936); Royal Irish Academy, MS 3.A.40, fol. 161.

⁹ TNA: PRO, PROB 11/326, ffs. 363v–364.

¹⁰ Felltham, *Resolves; An Ordinance for taking away the Book of Common Prayer, and for establishing and putting in the execution of the Directory for the publique worship of God* (London, 1645).

¹¹ Felltham, i.

¹² W.P. Harrison, *The High-churchman Disarmed: A Defense of Our Methodist Fathers* (Nashville: Publishing House of the M. E. Church, 1895), 26.

¹³ It is difficult to measure how frequent were the strategies of baptism or how strongly attached people became to alternatives to the Book of Common Prayer. One reason for such complications is that, as historical demographers have determined, the registration of baptisms was disrupted during the period of Civil Wars and Interregnum. In August 1653, "An Act touching Marriages and the Registering thereof; and also touching Births and Burials" required civil registration of births, marriages, and burials, rather than ecclesiastical registration of religious rites of passage. However, only a minority of parishes complied as most localities continued to use their old parish register to record baptisms.

¹⁴ Caroline Boswell, *Disaffection and Everyday Life in Interregnum England* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2017), 2-3; Tim Harris, *Restoration: Charles II and His Kingdoms, 1660-1685* (London: Penguin Book Publishers, 2005), 44.

by a reforming agenda. Spearheaded by a new Commonwealth, it was hugely ambitious in two fronts. First, a stable institutional structure in the form of a republic was sought to replace the monarchy, abolished by the regicide in 1649. Second, and more pertinent to this project, was the disestablishment of the Church of England, simultaneous to the regicide, with a government-sponsored and Puritanical reformation. Scholars of the seventeenth-century have stressed the importance of the political and constitutional implications of the new Commonwealth in English affairs. When historians have considered matters of religiosity, they have limited their parameters of study to the pursuance of transformed parishes in which a godly, moral, and disciplined community was sought.¹⁵ However, what of the Church of England's followers during this period? Did they convert to the Puritanism, seek internal exile, or did they revolt against newly implemented reforms?¹⁶

Many of the questions with which the figures in this study were faced within their particular historical situation, and which their responses to that context suggest, remain relevant. Although most English did not believe the Revolution wrought a fundamental split from the past, all members of English society grappled with the effects of Civil War and the significant transformations in church and state that accompanied it. In this climate of political and religious revolution, it was all the more alarming because it affected, and was promoted by, those most vital to the enforcement of the public order: the judges, the gentry, and the clergy.¹⁷

Harris paints a distinct dichotomy between the atmosphere engendered by the execution of Charles I in 1649 and the Restoration of the Stuart line through his son, Charles II in 1660.

¹⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 58-61. See also, R. J. Acheson, "Happy Seeker, Happy Finder: The Seeker," in *Radical Puritans in England 1550-1660*, ed., R. J. Acheson (London: Routledge, 1995); 61-84; Bernard Capp, *Puritan Reformation and its Enemies in the Interregnum, 1649-1660* (London: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁶ Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 160-162.

¹⁷ Diane Purkiss, *The English Civil War: Papists, Gentlewomen, Soldiers, and Witchfinders in the Birth of Modern Britain* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 260.

The commonwealth's assault, encapsulated by the reconceptualization of obedience, loyalty, and affection, further disrupted traditional hierarchies. Civil war, by its very nature, divided and factionalized society. It forced Parliamentarians and Royalists to vie for allegiance and ushered in a new era for popular political participation. However, for those held down by a government determined to destroy any trace of their national church, Conformists were forced underground to express their religiosity. Compounding matters further were Cromwell's insistence on fashioning a sense of religious liberalism, a conception underlined by the seeking of religious tolerance. Indeed, although the Lord Protector may have sought to foster a new tolerant climate, he shaped a new system of religious suppression.¹⁸ When faced with the new system, the church's loyal supporters rebelled against the Protector's ordinances. Yet, there was somewhere the people could turn: outbuildings. Reflecting local concerns of ordinary people and the power struggles of religious expressions, the derelict buildings and manor houses of Interregnum England became sites where people challenged and negotiated the shape of religious preservation.

It may be tempting for one to label the contest over church doctrines at the local level as mere squabbling. However civic, national, and everyday politics intersected in this vital, localized thoroughfare. Indeed, such mirroring is explicit in the role of Cromwell's major-generals. For Cromwell, the major-generals of the Commonwealth were the policing limbs of his Protectorate and his form of godly governors. These men were predominately young, energetic, and dedicated to the cause, all with distinguished records as soldiers. They had personal connections to the territories that they administered, and they were, for the most part, deeply committed to some form of radical Protestantism.¹⁹ While the endeavor to implement an ambitious program of godly reform

¹⁸ John Coffey, *Persecution, and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 10-13.

¹⁹ Christopher Durston, *Cromwell's Major-Generals: Godly Government During the English Revolution* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2001), 155. David Watson Rannie, "Cromwell's Major-Generals," *The English Historical Review* 10, no. 39 (1895), 471-506. Henry Reece, *The Army in Cromwellian England 1649-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 88-93; Anthony Fletcher, "The Religious Motivation of Cromwell's

represented a formidable task, it was one in which all of these men regarded as absolutely central to their mission and embraced with great enthusiasm. As staunch Puritans, a strong commitment to the concept of the godly society was at the very core of their collective religious vision, and many saw their appointments as an opportunity to suppress wickedness.²⁰

In autumn of 1655, the major-generals departed for the provinces they were to administer. Their goals were simple, aiming not only to improve the security of Cromwell's protectoral regime on the public streets, but also to reform the nation's morality. Indeed, Cromwell ordered his generals to, "keep a strict eye on the carriage of the disaffected," and directed them to "allow no horse races, cock fighting, bear baiting, or unlawful assemblies," as such revolts often erupted during such occasions.²¹ Several days later, an additional instruction ordered them to review what progress had been made within their areas towards the implementation of the 1654 ordinance for the ejection of scandalous and insufficient ministers and schoolmasters, personally tasking the officers Cromwell contacted to oversee the removal of any such individuals who remained in post.²² As the year progressed, further orders widened the scope of their mission toward moral reform.²³ By November, the major-generals were ordered to ensure that no ejected cleric preached in public, that no Royalist employed any ejected clergyman as a private chaplain or tutor, and clergymen were prohibited from administering the sacraments according to the Book of Common Prayer.²⁴ Under such duress, set within the parameters of Cromwellian intolerance, some clergymen fell under the purview of these generals sought to adhere to the national church despite

Major-Generals," in *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, ed. D. Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 261-283.

²⁰ Austin Woolrych, "The Cromwellian Protectorate: A Military Dictatorship?" *History* 75, no. 244 (1990), 207-31; Blair Worden, "Oliver Cromwell and the Protectorate," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series*, 20 (2010), 57-83.

²¹ *CSPD 1655*, 296.

²² Christopher Durston, "'Settling the Hearts and Quieting the Minds of All Good People:' The Major-Generals and the Puritan Minorities of Interregnum England," *History* 85, no. 278 (2000), 248.

²³ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

such suppressions. Those caught evading the dictates of the State were quickly found in contempt of these ordinances, with the penalty of imprisonment or banishment strictly enforced. In short, under such pressure, set within the constraints of Cromwellian intolerance, those who continued to adhere to the national church in the face of repression had to practice in secrecy.²⁵

The subsequent discussions will benefit from a brief attempt to clarify terms regarding the different periods and meaning of preservation addressed in this project, many of which are very similar and sometimes overlapping. Therefore, some introductory explanation seems advisable. First, concerning periods, the English Revolution period refers to the two decades spanning 1640-1660.²⁶ The Interregnum (1649-1660) refers to the years between the death of Charles I (1649) and the return of Charles II, known as the Restoration (1660). The Commonwealth refers to the English state during the Interregnum, which was republican in theory at least. The Protectorate (1653-1658) is a term used by historians for the period when Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell or his son Richard wielded a power not unlike that of a monarch based on the authority of the Instrument of Government (1653). Although the primary period of focus in this dissertation is the Interregnum, primary evidence will also be drawn from the civil war era to provide a comprehensive examination of Conformity during the 1650s.

Second, what should the defenders of the episcopacy, ceremonies, and the established Church be called? Anthony Milton has suggested two terms: Conformists and avant-garde Conformists. Conformists, according to Milton, were those who accepted the episcopal structure of the Church and passively accepted the innovations of the Laudian period. When considered in the

²⁵ Durston, *Cromwell's Major Generals*, 154-161.

²⁶ "English Revolution" has been used by historians to define two different events in English history. The first, by Whig historians, was the Glorious Revolution of 1688, whereby James II was replaced by William III and Mary II as monarch and a constitutional monarchy was established. In the twentieth century, Marxist historians used the term "English Revolution" to describe the period of the Civil Wars and Commonwealth period (1640-1660). This dissertation employs the latter description to neatly refer to the period encapsulating both the Civil War and the Interregnum.

Interregnum period, and in agreement with Milton, these actions also mirror the attempted preservation of the disestablished church, albeit under a more precarious circumstance. In this project, therefore, the term “Conformists,” was a displaced follower of the Church of England who sought to preserve the tenets of the disestablished Church of England. They also both fostered and maintained a shared cultural system that stabilized their communal interaction in a period exemplified by politico-religious chaos. The term “Preservationism” ascribes to the attempt by Conformists to preserve their religiosity in the face of Cromwellian ordinances throughout the English Revolution.²⁷

Third, and central to this framework, are the features and tenets of Preservationism. The notion of unity as expounded by the gospel had created stability within the Church of England. From the time of the Reformation, Preservationists had adhered to what is called “the historic episcopate,” that is, to the succession of bishops as the sign of the ordered transmission of pastoral authority in the Church from generation to generation.²⁸ In the episcopate’s debate with the Puritans beginning during the reign of Elizabeth I, the bishops of the Church emerged as a vital component in understanding the Church of England.²⁹ Preservationists exuded an attitude toward the episcopate as a gift to be shared for the building up of the Church’s unity, rather than as a basis for the exclusion of non-episcopal traditions.

If unity, as derived from the gospel, was the binding of the community together, the Book of Common Prayer was the instrument of its preservation. As discussed in Chapter One, the prayer book, along with the King James Bible, represented the foundation of worship and doctrine in the

²⁷ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 8-9.

²⁸ Louis Weil, “The Gospel in Anglicanism,” in *The Study of Anglicanism*, eds. Stephen Sykes, John E. Booty, and Jonathan Knight (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998), 52.

²⁹ R. A. Beddard, “Restoration Oxford and the Remaking of the Protestant Establishment,” in *The History of the University of Oxford, vol. IV: Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, 8 vols. ed. Nicholas Tyacke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 4:803.

Church of England. Prioritizing the use of the Book of Common Prayer over any other prayer book created a common basis in worship circles. Not only was the prayer book defended in the private sphere, but it was also shielded from attack in the public spaces of society. For example, between winter 1640/1 and the summer of 1641, some six petitions in defense of the clergy and Book of Common Prayer from Cheshire to London.³⁰ Additionally, accompanying the Prayer Book, the Thirty-Nine Articles provided the clergy with guidelines. Together, these tracts presented the liturgy and doctrine of the national Church. Church leaders under Charles I, armed with these ecclesiastical instruments, continued to block Puritan attempts to complete the Reformation. Alongside them, militants, fearful of popish tendencies to infiltrate English pulpits, redoubled their efforts to reshape the national Church.

The issue of authority is embedded deep within the anxieties of the Interregnum church. Authority in belief, for instance, might appear simple, if only one could say that the decision about what is to be believed or done rests with the individual's private judgment according to his or her best reason and conscience.³¹ However, there are problems when the individual is juxtaposed against the community's judgment and the tradition of its sacred texts. Indeed, the case of John Owen, appointed by Cromwell to be Dean of Christ Church and to purge that society of any attachment it might have to the Book of Common Prayer, serves as an example of the individual battling with conscience and reason.³² Owen, despite his Puritan allegiance, furtively aided and defended those who continued to use the Book of Common Prayer. When biblical scholar, Edward Pocock was accused of reading the Book of Common Prayer at Childrey, Oxfordshire in 1654, Owen intervened on his behalf, thus saving him the errant Pocock from punishment.³³

³⁰ Tim Harris, *Rebellion: Britain's First Stuart Kings, 1567-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 459.

³¹ Joseph William Martin, *Religious Radicals in Tudor England* (London: Hambledon, 1989), 101.

³² Ryan M. McGraw, *John Owen Trajectories in Reformed Orthodox Theology* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 166.

³³ Robert William Dale, *History of English Congregationalism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 339.

Furthermore, Owen attended the services of Dr. Thomas Willis when Churchman John Fell read from the Book of Common Prayer. Owen did not object to its use, but partook in the service.³⁴ These incidents are indeed significant because of Owen's supposed loyalty to the Cromwellian regime. Collusion between crucial ministers, like Owen, and those who continued to adhere to the Church of England are moments in which intense faith transcended governmental attempts at suppression. The episodes also reveal the triumph of conscience and reason over political authority. Such events uncover a socio-religious network that overlooked governmental restrictions and, instead, fostered religious toleration in an increasingly intolerant realm.

In the absence of a national church, displaced congregations turned to church leaders whose works alleviated their anxieties. Richard Hooker had attempted to provide a careful interpretation and application of the various normative principles bearing on his situation as an Anglican divine.³⁵ He debated the “laws” of God, the angels, and the nature of human well-doing, specifically the personal and social. Hooker’s position in the Church of England parallels that of Martin Luther in Lutheranism, John Calvin in Presbyterianism, and Thomas Aquinas in Roman Catholicism. Furthermore, Hooker was the most influential theologian in the aftermath of the English Reformation. His emphases on reason, tolerance, and the value of tradition have had a lasting influence on the development of the Church of England. He took a position that was more inclusive, in the sense of tolerating more variety of opinion and accepting a mixture of practice in religious and state affairs. Both in *The Certaintie* and the later sermons, Hooker not only retains, but insists upon the doctrine of perseverance.³⁶ Succinctly, this doctrine declared that those whom God justified can, in the words of the Westminster Confession, “neither totally nor finally fall

³⁴ John Lavicount Anderdon, *The life of Thomas Ken: bishop of Bath and Wells* (London: John Murray Albemarle Street Publishers, 1854), 41.

³⁵ For further discussion regarding Hooker, see chapter 1.

³⁶ Richard Hooker, “A Learned and Comfortable Sermon of the Certaintie and Perpetuitie of Faith in the Elect,” in *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, 5 vols., ed. W.S. Hill (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 5:69-82

away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.”³⁷ Indeed, Hooker asserted that in times of great oppression, especially concerning the repression one’s own faith, it was a test of God. Perseverance was needed to overcome such hindrances, best performed in the form of religious practices. Only those with a resolute faith would endure. When Hooker’s arguments are considered in the context of his congregation during the Interregnum, it creates a new dimension in our understanding of the repressed church and how it continued before being restored in 1660.

With these factors considered, a final component of preservation must be discussed: toleration. Freedom of religious expression was also at the heart of Preservationism. The church sought to include rather than exclude; something Cromwell promised but failed to establish.³⁸ In the Book of Common Prayer, for example, Anglican theology has found its most characteristic expression in seeking inclusion. The reason for such tolerant attitudes is found in the common heritage the church shared with many Protestant denominations and Roman Catholicism. It is true that the new religious identities which emerged from the conflicts of the Reformation share a collective repudiation of the papacy and popery and of the allegedly materialistic religious system which the papacy headed.³⁹ Amid the turmoil of the Civil War, the Church of England adapted to the religious changes brought about by reform and, in the process, reconstructed its culture.⁴⁰ The changing and adaptive approach to religious worship is also evident in Roman Catholicism. The old faith’s image as a monolithic and unchanging body, without diversity of interpretation, is far from the actuality. This was also the case for the Church of England. Within the Anglican

³⁷ Gerald Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 499.

³⁸ For further discussion regarding Cromwellian intolerance, see chapter 1.

³⁹ Eamon Duffy, *Reformation Divided: Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 2. See also Christopher Haigh, “The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation,” in *The English Reformation Revised*, edited by Christopher Haigh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19-33.

⁴⁰ Norman Jones, *The English Reformation: Religion and Cultural Adaption* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 33-34.

Communion, the accepted norms of authority are located first in the faith declared in Scripture, then in the safeguard of interpretation provided by the Catholic creeds, and finally in the liturgical tradition of the prayer book, which is rooted in ways of worship much older than their sixteenth-century origin.⁴¹ It is the prayer book that remains an influential factor on the historical shaping of Anglicanism in its negotiated space of *via media* between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex comprise the four parishes of this study.⁴² Each county was awash with efforts to preserve the Church of England's practices despite being crucibles for Puritan reform. Thus, resistance to Puritan religious innovation was exceptionally inflexible.⁴³ The proximity of East Anglia to populous continental centers, particularly the Protestant Flemish areas of the Netherlands, and the easy access which its rivers afforded to immigrants gave the region a distinctive character with a dense population.⁴⁴ The growth of the export trade in raw wool linked it tightly with the Low Countries from which new ideas penetrated English thought, especially when religious refugees flocked to Albion from the Continent.⁴⁵ Many conditions favored the growth of a prosperous middle class, fomenting a booming growth in agriculture, commerce, and industry.⁴⁶ These parishes, then, were well equipped to make their influence felt not only in local history, but to resist domination in religion and politics from metropolitan centers elsewhere in the Isles. However, religious scholars of the region have focused on the strength of Puritanism and evaded the question of preservation in the area. This lacunae in

⁴¹ Sykes, *The Study of Anglicanism*, 96-97.

⁴² The selection of these counties was based entirely on primary source material. Not only do these four countries hold vast amounts of primary material relating to the subject of this dissertation, but they also embody a wide range of evidence from the enacting of private services at local level to the actions of distinct episcopal clergymen seeing preservation.

⁴³ F. Walker, "Geographical Factors in the Civil War in East Anglia," *Geography* 24, no. 3 (1939), 171-81.

⁴⁴ Walker, "Geographical Factors," 171.

⁴⁵ John Foxe, *Book of Martyrs: Or A History of the Lives, Sufferings, and Triumphant Deaths of the Primitive Protestant Martyrs* (1684), iii, 580.

⁴⁶ Kenneth W. Shipps, *Lay Patronage of East Anglian Puritan Clerics in Pre-revolutionary England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2007).

the historiography is a disservice. And, as the complexity of Protestantism is lacking in the region, anything focusing on those not engaged directly in the preservation of the Church of England is even barer.

Unsurprisingly, then, the argument that East Anglia as a region was the stronghold of seventeenth-century English Puritanism is not without issues. Far from there being a cohesive and discrete East Anglican community, recent studies suggest that there were considerable differences among the counties later to be incorporated into the Eastern Association.⁴⁷ As part of Westminster's efforts to improve the administration of its forces, the Parliamentary militias of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire were established as the "Eastern Association" on 20 December 1642. While parts of the region were economically advanced, with extensive commercial contacts the vehicle for the dissemination of mercantile contracts alongside radical ideas, modernization had not proceeded with equal speed throughout East Anglia. Despite this mobilization of Puritan zeal, questions remain regarding the true nature of religious homogeneity in the Eastern parishes.

The issue of intolerance was further aggravated by the historical premise which placed the religious discipline of East Anglia under the dioceses of London, Norwich and Ely in the hands of Archbishop Laud and Bishop Wren. Together, both men were the chief protagonists of that party in the Stuart church which showed no toleration for Puritan dissent. Thus, subjugation was particularly severe in this area as the Puritans often experienced their own form of suppression before the Interregnum. It was not at all uncommon for the sympathies and actions of localities to be dominated by the policy of the local clergy, and the course of events in parishes such as Lindsey, Pinewood, Danbury, and Mutford can be explained only by reference to such personal factors.

⁴⁷ Alfred Kingston's *East Anglia and the Civil War* was the first attempt made to treat the history of the Eastern Association as a whole, and to show how it arose, how it was organized, and how it was supported. Since its publication, some efforts have been made to shed light on the impact of the association. Alfred Kingston, *East Anglia and the Civil War* (London: Elliot Stock, 1902).

Similarly, the University of Cambridge, by training many strongly Puritan ministers in the surrounding counties and by supplying “lecturers,” did much to foster Puritanism throughout East Anglia.

Scholarship concerning the geographical character and historical experience of East Anglia has assisted in our understanding of fundamental issues involved at the outbreak of hostilities in 1642, but they cannot explain all the changes of attitude during the Interregnum. The apparent shift in the confessional outlook of the associated counties and the anarchy of the Civil War arose from circumstances produced by the course of the war itself. F. Walker, for instance, asserts that one reasoning for this transformation was the artificial expansion of the Association's territories to include regions of an entirely different character and the enforced share of the Association in events outside its boundaries.⁴⁸ Walker also argues that the changing character of the dispute itself in its later phases, when political intrigue and new religious divisions, made motives obscure and clear-cut distinctions between Royalists and Parliamentarians no longer possible. While Walker's claims certainly hold ground, issues relating to the repressed Church of England clergy and their attempt to preserve their national church need to be considered.⁴⁹ In an already fractured world, clergy and lay attempts to preserve their religiosity only furthered divisions abound in the Eastern counties. Moreover, such attempts at church preservation assisted in the eventual restoration of the Stuart line.

Together, these four localities offer a unique window into a profoundly devout world embroiled in crisis. The development of the Commonwealth inexorably dismantled the structures of East Anglia's religious life. Private manors and abandoned woodsheds replaced the unrestricted local monasteries and churches. The displaced Preservations did not raise arms to revolt, but instead repudiated Puritan beliefs by continuing to adhere to the Church of England's practices.

⁴⁸ Walker, “Geographical Factors,” 179-80.

⁴⁹ Walker, “Geographical Factors,” 182

This was their revolutionary archetype. These efforts, in defiance of Cromwell's ordinances, helped facilitate the Restoration of 1660.

For many years, seventeenth-century British history has divided scholars by periodization, thematic approaches, and historiographical trends.⁵⁰ Whereas the Civil Wars (1642-1649) and Restoration England (1660-1688/9) have garnered considerable attention, the Interregnum (1649-1660) remains in the shadow between these two periods. Nonetheless, the historiographical antecedents to the Interregnum has illuminated the vitality of the Church of England's followers prior to 1649, and its revival following restoration in 1660. The literature on the Civil War and Interregnum is severely weighted to the causes and progression of the actual armed conflict which began in 1642, often ignoring the period of the Interregnum as nothing more than the unfortunate tale of a failing dictatorial regime. Indeed, the social and cultural history of Interregnum England is still largely unwritten.⁵¹

The modern historiography of the Civil Wars and Interregnum is characterized by four trends, namely, the Whig interpretation, the Marxist understanding, the Revisionist approach, and the Post-Revisionist explanation. The Whig interpretation, pioneered by T. B. Macaulay, Samuel Rawson Gardiner, and Lawrence Stone, discussed the Civil War in terms of the clash between liberty and absolutism, specifically the tyranny of Charles I's regime.⁵² They believed the Civil Wars were a result of Parliament's struggle to prevent the king from undermining the traditional rights and freedoms of English citizens. Oliver Cromwell, for example, was seen as the great liberator of the English people. The Marxist turn in the 1960s, advocated by Christopher Hill,

⁵⁰ Michael Braddick's *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution* is a valuable introduction to the English Revolution and the long-term legacies of the crisis in the Three Kingdoms. See Michael J. Braddick, *The Oxford handbook of the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁵¹ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 180.

⁵² Thomas Babington Macauley, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second*, 6 Vols. C. H. Firth, ed. (London: Macmillan & co., 1913-15); Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War, 1642-1649*, 4 Vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901); Lawrence Stone, *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529-1642* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

William Lamont, David Underdown and others, sought to understand the Civil Wars by overlooking constitutional explanations, and look instead to social and economic factors driving the disorder.⁵³ The Revisionists Mark Kishlansky, Blair Worden, and Conrad Russell, for example, criticized the idea of any long term causes of the civil war, rejecting teleological history and the use of hindsight in the search for causes.⁵⁴ Thus, they emphasize the role of short-term factors, such as the divisive effects of Charles' religious policies. More recently, Post-Revisionists such as John Morrill, Anne Hughes and Michael Braddick contest the idea that the Civil War was inevitable.⁵⁵ They also argue that there was not one singular cause for the Civil wars, but a multiplicity of perspectives must be employed. They stress, for example, the importance of events in Scotland and Ireland, arguing that the two kingdoms played an important role in the events of the English Civil War. What follows is a brief survey of the historiography concerning the Church of England during the early modern period.

Claire Cross's pioneering work, published in 1972, surveyed research on the national church that resulted from the Puritan Revolution and on the peripheral churches and congregations that emerged during the Civil Wars.⁵⁶ Regarding the suppressed Church of England's clergy, she briefly explores those who ignored parliamentary ordinances against prelacy, arguing that they did not organize a church in opposition to the national church. Although some bishops, like Robert Skinner, Brian Duppa, Joseph Hall, and Thomas Morton continued ordaining candidates for the

⁵³ Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London, Maurice Temple Smith, 1972), William Lamont, *Puritanism and The Origins of the English Civil War* (London: Dr. Williams's Library, Friends of Doctor Williams's Library, 2000); David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁵⁴ Mark A. Kishlansky, *The Rise of the New Model Army* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament 1648-53* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁵⁵ John Morrill, *Revolt of the Provinces: Conservatives and Radicals in the English Civil War, 1630-1650* (St. Leonard's: Allen & Unwin, 1976); Harris, *Rebellion*; Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2008); Ann Hughes *Politics, Society, and Civil War in Warwickshire 1620-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁵⁶ Claire Cross, "The Church of England 1646-1660," *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*, ed. G. E. Aylmer (London: Macmillan Education, 1972), 99-120.

priesthood, they did remarkably little to perpetuate apostolic succession. By winter of 1659, only nine English bishops remained alive; the episcopal succession by the time of the Restoration had almost failed through inanition.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Cross examines how conforming ministers differed over the extent to which they wished to impose discipline upon their parishes and over the extent to which they would share its exercise with the laity. She asserts that the conforming clergy accepted the substitution of the General Directory of Worship for the Book of Common Prayer with remarkable equanimity.⁵⁸

That same year, Bernard Capp revealed the nature of millenarianism in seventeenth-century England through his examination of the Cromwellian Puritan sect, the Fifth Monarchy Men.⁵⁹ Capp argued that Fifth Monarchism had a political program that was elitist in the rule of the elect over the ungodly, a social program that was egalitarian within the ranks of the saints, an economic program that was not anti-capitalistic, and a program for law reform that was based upon the Mosaic Code. Moreover, in recent years, Capp has surveyed English social and cultural life in the period of the Interregnum. By focusing on the “reformation of manners,” Capp unearthed how reformers fought for godly transformation. Indeed, Capps’s analysis ranges from the conventional to the extreme; drink and disorder; worldliness, expressed by means of clothes, music, and art; and collective pleasures of the theater and playhouse, sports, and hunting.⁶⁰

Patrick Collinson’s scholarship outlines the activity of the Church of England and its followers between 1559 and 1625. The Church, he argues, was resilient, stable, consensual, and infused by shared Protestant values.⁶¹ He rejects the notion that the Church was an institution

⁵⁷ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 113.

⁵⁹ Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972); “The Religious Marketplace: Public Disputations in Civil War and Interregnum England.” *English Historical Review*, 129 (2014), 47-78; “A Door of Hope Re-opened: The Fifth Monarchy, King Charles and King Jesus,” *Journal of Religious History*, 32 (2008), 16-30.

⁶⁰ Capp, *Puritan Reformation*, 3-4.

⁶¹ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

fragmented by weaknesses, divisions and divergent tendencies. Instead, Collinson asserts that historians, like A.G. Dickens, have neglected what was ordinary in the life of both parishioners and the lower clergy.⁶² In examining the laity, Collinson reveals that certain activities such as preaching, anti-Catholic polemics, speeches, public fasts, catechizing, and prayer meetings distinguished Puritans, creating mutual recognition and community among them.⁶³

Ann Hughes's reassessment of national Church during the 1650s uncovers how it was flexible and highly responsive to local preferences. Cromwell, she notes, frequently used his immense patronage to endorse local choices.⁶⁴ She sees the Cromwellian Triers, a national body responsible for vetting new clergy, as energetic and efficient, and she argues how the Commission of Ejectors, those appointed to expel inadequate ministers and schoolmasters, were objective in their rulings. Furthermore, Hughes has assessed the role of preaching to convince followers of godly worship. She asserts that "popular Puritanism" was by no means an oxymoron. Many Puritan disputants proved themselves ready and able to play to the gallery of potential followers.

John Spurr's work further supported Hughes's findings as he uncovers how Anglicanism was born out of the enduring turmoil of the Civil War.⁶⁵ He describes how Restoration clergymen developed a distinctive Anglicanism by creating a clerical consensus about pastoral priorities and the dangers of apathy, sin, and various forms of religious dissidence. Spurr explores lay-clerical relations, the effectiveness of the church's administration and courts, the rise of religious indifference, the nature of schism, the clergy's pastoral strategy, and the Anglican preoccupation

⁶² A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1964); Dickens, in particular, argues how Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin and other continental reformers exerted strong influences on the growth of Protestantism in England. Whereas Dickens explored the rise of Protestant England through the efforts of notable reformers, Patrick Collinson examined the religion of Protestants from "below."

⁶³ Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants*, 12-17.

⁶⁴ Ann Hughes, "A pulpit guarded: confrontation between orthodox and radicals in revolutionary England" in *John Bunyan and his England, 1628-88*, eds. A. Laurence, W. R. Owens and S. Simms (Bloomsbury: London, 1990), 31-51.

⁶⁵ John Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England, 1646-1689* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

with divine providence. Spurr's work remains unrivaled as a survey of the church in this period. He does, however, eschew such crucial topics as the work of the bishops and parish activities.

At the heart of Donald A. Spaeth's scholarship are the disputes that regularly erupted between the Church of England's clergymen and members of their congregations between 1660 and 1740. Spaeth's bottom-up approach permits him to view parish religion from the pews rather than, as is so often the case, from just the pulpit. According to Spaeth, English popular religious consumption did not decline during the long eighteenth century and parsons' fears that the proliferation of nonconformity placed "the Church in danger" were unwarranted.⁶⁶ Employing ecclesiastical court records from three hundred parishes in Wiltshire during the eight decades, Spaeth highlights the importance of the laity in upholding the church's moral values. Indeed, when clerical neglect was involved, parishioners utilized the courts to uphold standards of morality within their churches. Such episodes record the importance that members of the laity vested in their own participation in established religion.⁶⁷ Thus, Spaeth's analysis calls to attention the role of lay and clerical co-operation during the Interregnum.

Judith D. Maltby has also assessed the formation of Anglicanism.⁶⁸ She argues that the mid-seventeenth century was a key period in the formation by tracing the continuing popular attachment to prayer-book services and the festive calendar.⁶⁹ Though the deprived bishops provided little leadership, these two strands played a key part in the emergence of a self-conscious, Anglicanism, after the Restoration.⁷⁰ Moreover, Maltby examines the considerable numbers who rallied into post-Reformation parish churches without anger or resentment. These English men and

⁶⁶ Donald A. Spaeth, *The Church in an Age of Danger: Parsons and Parishioners, 1660-1740* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-7.

⁶⁸ Judith Maltby, "Suffering and Surviving: The Civil Wars, the Commonwealth and the Formation of 'Anglicanism,'" in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, eds. by Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

⁶⁹ Maltby, *Prayer Book and People*, 45.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

women, she asserts, did not identify as papists, church papists, nonconforming Puritans, or sectarians. By employing thirty-plus regional petitions made to Parliament in favor of episcopacy and the Prayer Book in 1640-1643, she analyzed the textual diversity and richness embedded within the source. Finally, Maltby's micro-historical approach permits her to examine, in detail, Sir Thomas Aston (1600-1645), who sat in the House of Commons in 1640, and was a staunch churchman and Royalist.

More recently, Fiona McCall's work provides a comprehensive analysis of these ejected clergies and their families during the English Revolution. McCall examines the connections between the clergy's pre-war activities and the accusations made against them by the parliamentary authorities; their political role and activity; their sufferings and responses to ejection; and their restoration in 1660. At the heart of the study is an analysis of the retrospective accounts of clerical ejections and sufferings collected in mid-seventeenth century by the Exeter Anglican cleric, John Walker, who was looking to answer Edmund Calamy's martyrology of those non-Conformists removed by the Restoration authorities in 1662.⁷¹ Rather than providing a quantitative survey, McCall recovers the experiences of these clergymen, and in so doing, captures some of the violent dislocation and disruption which attended their ejection.

These historiographical arguments mentioned above are indicative of the significant contributions to historiography of the Church of England throughout the seventeenth century. Missing from these investigations, however, are local accounts of Church's followers during the Interregnum. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to expand on the scholarship of these historians by combining local historical narrative building and analyses with religious nuance.

The methodology found in this study is a mixed-methods approach, employing both a historicist mode of interpretation, led by the Cambridge School of political thought, and a micro-

⁷¹ Fiona McCall, *Baal's Priests: The Loyalist Clergy and the English Revolution* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013).

historical approach, led by historians of social and cultural history. Scholarship dealing with the discourse of Stuart England includes the works of J.W. Allen, Margaret Judson, Quentin Skinner, J. P. Sommerville, and Perez Zagorin.⁷² Although these historians of political thought have made their own contributions to the field, this dissertation adapts the methods of J.G.A. Pocock. Pocock's importance lays in his advocacy of studying past ideas in their own context. Specifically, his emphasis regarding the changes and developments in the tradition of ideas chosen for investigation, as well as a focus on the problems concerning methodology in the history of ideas.

Whereas Pocock's method is instrumental in understanding sources relating to the early modern era, another approach must be taken when examining local parish life. Often, little commentary on or explanation of the religious practices and political actions of local authorities has survived. Thus, a different approach to analyzing these sources is required. The method in this study is modeled on the work of a variety of other scholars, most notably Natalie Zemon Davis, Eamon Duffy, Paul Seaver, Margaret Spufford, and David Underdown.⁷³ These scholars have applied micro-historical frameworks in their relevant scholarship, one in which the people who

⁷² Works by J.W. Allen, J.P. Sommerville, and Margaret Judson deal with the political discourse of the early Stuart age. Perez Zagorin wrestled with political discourse during 1645 – 1660 in England. J.W. Allen, *English Political Thought, 1603 – 1644* (London: Methuen and Company, 1938); J.P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603 – 1640* (London: Longman, 1986); Margaret Judson, *The Crisis of the Constitution: An Essay in Constitutional and Political Thought in England, 1603 – 1645* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1964); Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1954). Scholarly articles concentrating on political discourse by J.G.A. Pocock include “British History: A Plea for a New Subject,” *Journal of Modern History*, XLVII (1975): 601-28; “Reconstructing Historical Traditions (a review of Q. Skinner, Foundations of Modern Political Thought),” *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, III (1979): 95- 113; “Political Theory, History and Myth, a Salute to John Gunnell,” *Annals of Scholarship*, 1 (1980): 3–25; “The History of British Political Thought: The Creation of a Center,” *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985): 283–310; “Virtues, Rights, and Manners: A Model for Historians of Political Thought,” *Political Theory*, IX (1981): 353-68; J. G. A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷³ Spufford in particular played a crucial role in the broadening of English social and cultural history, shifting the focus away from the political and social elite in urban communities to the underrepresented in local and rural areas. Thus, she challenged assumptions about the limited intellectual worlds of rural people. See Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Eamon Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New haven: Yale University Press, 2003). David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

lived in the past are not mere pawns of great underlying forces of history. Rather than concentrating on observing and analyzing statistical patterns, for this study it is more realistic, worthwhile, and telling to examine specific cases. The reasoning for this methodology is trifold. First, while often partial and unable to allow a comprehensive reconstruction, smaller-scale analyses can reintroduce people as the subjects of history, in contrast to many of the governing macro-historical concepts.⁷⁴ Second, it allows the historian to uniquely address the dramatic changes parish churches experienced during the seventeenth century. High church politics affected policy, but it was parishioners who continued actively to shape the Church during the period in question. Third, by interpreting this action as a seventeenth-century version of religious preservation at the local level, one may analyze the relationship between micro-historical findings and macro-historical processes.⁷⁵ Hence, the analysis derived from using a micro-historical method sheds light on religious preservation in the 1650s and how such activities embodied the salvation of the national church.

For the purposes of this dissertation, John Walker's collection, located at the Bodleian Library, Oxford serves as the richest source of data.⁷⁶ Walker was a Conformist clergyman known for his biographical work on the Church of England priests during the English Revolution. His collection consists of papers on which he based his *Attempt towards...an Account of the numbers and sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England* (1714). The papers also include a large number of original communications from all parts of England, but especially East Anglia, as well as Walker's own notes and extracts. A further valuable source is the Indemnity Committee papers

⁷⁴ Macro-history engages with large, long-term trends in world history, searching for ultimate patterns through a comparison of proximate detail. See for example Jared M. Diamond, *Guns, germs, and steel: the fates of human societies* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

⁷⁵ David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 304. Chapter X, "The Revolution and the Communities," is indispensable in understanding the relationship between central and local government from 1649 to 1652.

⁷⁶ Bodl., MSS J Walker fols. C1-C11, E8.

and Committee for Plundered Ministers papers available at The National Archives in Kew. Together these sources disclose the names of those displaced Conformists resulting from civil wars and Interregnum.⁷⁷ Consisting of bound volumes of orders issued by the committee as well as boxes of loose papers, containing mostly petitions to the committee, the papers bring to light a contest which pitted parliament's officials in London and in the countryside against owners whose property they had confiscated.⁷⁸ Parliament set up the Indemnity Committee of Members of Parliament to protect its supporters from lawsuits and other actions made by those who believed Parliamentarians had wronged them.

Although Walker's collection indicates the suffering Church of England clergy called before the Indemnity Committee, he frequently did not follow up their stories thereby examining in detail collection. Thus, a weakness of the Committee for Plundered Ministers as a source is that the committee could not eliminate lawsuits lodged against Puritan clergy by displaced clergy or by disgruntled parishioners. The Indemnity Committee, however, could do just that and soon after its formation in the summer of 1647, the Committee for Plundered Ministers began referring cases to it. The Indemnity Committee papers illuminate the struggles over who would occupy the pulpits of England and to whom tithes payments were due stretching over the period from the early Civil War years to the early years of the Protectorate.⁷⁹ Godly clergy hounded by Church of England clergy as well as by their parishioners complained to the Indemnity Committee right up to its dissolution in 1655. These lawsuits did not end in 1655. Two years later, the Protectorate reaffirmed the Indemnity Ordinances and revived the function of the Indemnity Commission, though not the body, by transferring to the Exchequer its powers to protect the friends of

⁷⁷ TNA, SP24; TNA, SP22.

⁷⁸ I owe thanks to Professor John A. Shedd who generously assisted me in navigating the Indemnity Committee papers and Committee for Plundered Ministers papers at The National Archives in Kew. Considering the mass volume of papers in this collection, his assistance was very helpful in tracing the displaced clergy.

⁷⁹ John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1993), 314.

parliament.⁸⁰ Finally, in 1657, Parliament renewed its efforts to get law courts to heed its will by passing an act forbidding suits aimed at recovering tithes by any except ministers put in pulpits by governmental agencies. In sum, although Walker's collection is a very valuable source in reconstructing the world of Conformists in East Anglia during the Interregnum, its true potential is only realized when complimented by the above Committee collections.

Diaries are a curious resource, allegedly frank and factual. But the source is shaped by memory, thereby notoriously untrustworthy and potentially filled with half-truths or worse. Nevertheless, when carefully analyzed by the historian by employing the aforementioned approaches, they act as valuable tools in reconstructing the past. To ensure historical accuracy, the following content in the journals will be contextualized with the above sources. *The Diary of Ralph Josselin* holds significant importance to this project.⁸¹ Josselin was vicar of Earls Colne, Essex, from 1641 until his death in 1683. This is the intimate record of his ministry and his private doubts and triumphs as a Christian that give the memoir its shape. In addition to Josselin, John Evelyn also penned his daily life in his personal journal.⁸² From his accounts, one finds an intellectual who aimed to establish a major program of scientific and technological development, linked with social and economic progress. But his diary also reflects the musings of a devout follower of the Church of England who embodied uncompromising piety. From his *Diary*, we learn of the social and other customs of the day.

Finally, further valuable sources regarding East Anglia are the proceedings of the local judicial and administrative courts. These, of course, depend on the locality in which the chapter is set. For example, chapter 5 examines Essex. The records used here comprise of the *Quarter*

⁸⁰ John A. Shedd. "Legalism over Revolution: The Parliamentary Committee for Indemnity and Property Confiscation Disputes, 1647-1655," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 4 (2000), 1094.

⁸¹ Alan Macfarlane, ed. *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

⁸² William Bray, ed. *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 2 vols. (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1902). See note 1 for details concerning Evelyn's archive.

Sessions Order Book for the quarterly general meeting of Essex justices, which records much of the business of the justices but only rarely includes judicial punishments. The Essex *Quarter Sessions Rolls* gives numerically greater though often very cursory details of crimes or order violations brought before the justices, and are available online via the Essex County Council's website. The *General Sessions Book*, entirely hand-written, is an untranscribed source in which much of the town's administrative business and some judicial actions were recorded. Finally, the typescripts of the Essex sessions of the assizes, bi-yearly circuit courts depict the most serious cases. A full list of the examined local archives is outlined in the bibliography.

Chapter one sets the parameters of this project by focusing on two areas. First, it sets the framework for this study via the works of Richard Hooker. By employing the works of Hooker as a lens to view the discourses of the period, one can better approach an understanding. This reveals that the perseverance of Conformists amidst the persecution of Cromwellian England was not arbitrary, but a disciplined reaction in which spiritual guidance was actively sought and developed. The issue of suppression not only molded a new form of Anglicanism in the Interregnum, but accentuated certain tenets in times of persecution. Hooker is central to the entirety of these efforts. Second, it outlines the main politico-religious changes during the English Revolution. It focuses on the realm of Cromwellian England, where it delineates the issue of tolerance and religious liberation. This part not only explores these notions of freedom, but it also argues that Cromwell's alleged "religious liberalism" acted as a façade whereby the Protectorate disestablished the Church of England. Rather than doing so, however, the regime fashioned a complex system of private and public religious identity, which forced the national church underground, and even saw conspiratory Puritan ministers aiding Church of England members in their preservation attempts. Faction and schism as such are only part of this story, though, as many Puritan ministers became respected throughout their communities for their pastoral work. Where chapter one provides a backdrop to

this study, the following four chapters dive into the realm of Conformity in a period ruptured by religious intolerance.

Chapter Two explores Cambridgeshire, when in December 1642, The Eastern Association was formed by Cromwell. The Association created a large, well-equipped army with high morale and religious zeal. The consequence of such an institution was an extensive list of clergymen who suffered for their loyalty to Charles I. Clergymen loyal to the Crown's cause in the civil wars of the 1640s and 1650s were a key target for his Parliamentarian opponents. They were portrayed as malignant growths within the body politic, dangerously influential, inherently corrupt and immoral, and often tinged with sympathy for "popery," they were vilified in popular print and attacked in their parishes. This chapter examines the sequestration of Conformists' estates, the role of Cambridge University in preservation, the literature utilized by episcopal Conformists to guide their preservation attempts, and finally, how the threat of iconoclasm in local parish churches fostered a climate of intolerance and discontent.

The third chapter investigates Norfolk, a curious county whose people tended to be dour, stubborn, fond of argument and litigation, and strongly Puritan in their religious views. Throughout the seventeenth century, there persisted in Norfolk a bias toward the Puritan conviction. The county also had a lively past as the plots against Elizabeth, the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Treason had only served to enhance the memory of the Marian flames. At the close of the civil war, and "when the storm broke, probably no county was warmer in favor of the Commonwealth than Norfolk."⁸³ Indeed, several important families among the gentry were openly Puritan in their sympathies, while they were also disposed to regard their Conformist neighbors with suspicion, no matter how loyal they might appear and how acceptable in private discourse. They looked with misgiving upon any ceremony or usage that might bear the

⁸³ Walter Rye, *A History of Norfolk* (London: E. Stock, 1885), 86.

least suggestion of a return to Popery. With this, those who openly continued to practice rites involving the sacraments involving baptism and death were persecuted.

Chapter four not only examines how Suffolk's ardent followers of the disestablished church sought to persevere amid a turbulent revolution but also shows how religious observances, full of traditions, feast days, revelry and cultural significance were outlawed. The region was awash with efforts to preserve the Church of England's practices despite being a crucible for Puritan reform. Thus, by focusing on preservation attempts in Suffolk, this chapter reveals how the Church of England's followers preserved their religiosity through the clandestine continuance of Christian festivities. The banning of Christmas, for instance, became paramount to the Cromwellian pursuit of suppression. As the Civil Wars ended, Parliament was overrun with Puritans who believed Christmas was "popish." Thus, in 1647, Westminster declared celebrating the festival a punishable offense. During the Interregnum, the Cromwellian government went to great lengths to try to suppress celebrations, including marriage, and enforce the new restrictive laws.

The fifth chapter closes this project by peering into Essex's secluded private sphere where makeshift churches and secluded manor sheds were connected by a shared communal aim of salvation. It analyzes how Conformists in Essex navigated political and religious oppression by defending the sacraments of baptism and communion. Together, both sacraments were preserved as the only two post-Reformation sacraments in the Protestant Church of England. It further examines how clerical reputation was a vulnerable asset of the community. Rumor or claims made in court easily damaged a clergyman's character. Conclusively, this study also uncovers an enthusiastic intellectual current, spearhead by Conformist academics, active throughout Essex. This chapter surveys a range of representative examples.

This project aims to get at the heart of private experiences of revolution by considering the place of salvation in local parish communities. It does not detail or dispute the status of Royalism or the formation of popular allegiances during the English Revolution. Instead, this dissertation shows that individual responses to intrusive religious policies and practices associated with the Revolution assisted the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Indeed, if studying the Preservationist community of the 1650s compels us to rethink traditional assumptions concerning the vitality of Church of England, it further prompts us to question their role in the Restoration of 1660. Historians of the Restoration, such as John Spurr and Scott Sowerby, emphasize the role of religious toleration in the everyday lives of English men and women, but this project asserts that the roots of toleration were planted during the previous decade through various mechanisms.⁸⁴ First is the issue of grievances. One such grievance held by the Preservationists was their inability to practice and worship their religion. The Cromwellian regime was unsympathetic to such grievances, but rather than suppressing attempts at private worship; the attempt developed a feedback loop whereby Preservationists became inflamed to a greater extent. This grievance, in short, formed the basis of a model that can be described as the “thermodynamic” model in revolutions. As the Cromwellian government failed to respond to the grievances, repression backfired upon the regime, instigating revolution from below and behind closed doors.

However, this was a different style of revolution. This was not the armed conflict synonymous with Civil War England, nor was it the “bloodless” revolution associated with the Glorious Revolution of 1688/89.⁸⁵ Rather than being contested in the public sphere, a platform associated with polemics and fierce battles, it subsisted in the private realm where conventicles

⁸⁴ Spurr, *The Restoration Church of England*; Scott Sowerby, *Making Toleration: The Repealers and the Glorious Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁸⁵ The “bloodless” nature of the Glorious Revolution is disputed. In *Radical Whigs and Conspiratorial Politics in Late Stuart England* (State College, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999) for instance, Melinda Zook argues that “if we take the entire decade of the 1680s into account, the Glorious Revolution begins to look less glorious, less smooth and bloodless, and more like modern revolutions.” xv.

met in deep seclusion.⁸⁶ Private manors and abandoned woodsheds replaced the unrestricted local monasteries and churches. Indeed, the displaced Presbyterians did not raise arms to revolt but instead repudiated Puritan beliefs by continuing to adhere to the Church of England's practices. This was their revolutionary archetype. These efforts, in defiance of Cromwell's ordinances, facilitated the Restoration of 1660.

⁸⁶ See Peter Lake and Steve Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies*, 45:2 (2006), 270-292. Both argue that the phrase, "public sphere," does indeed have real efficacy in discussions of early modern England. Moreover, both scholars examined the interactions of print and manuscript and the relationship between what "really happened" and the stories people told about what was happening. Lake's and Pincus's placement of the notion of the public sphere allows one to give an account of religious conflict, embedded with theology, as a major motor for political conflict.

CHAPTER 1. FRAMING CONFORMITY: RICHARD HOOKER AND REVOLUTIONARY ENGLAND

To establish the parameters of this project, this chapter surveys the Church of England through the lens of Richard Hooker and examines the how the Cromwellian Church sought to suppress the national Church during the Interregnum. The motive behind this method is twofold. First, it establishes a framework through an analysis of the central facets of Anglicanism prior to the Interregnum. By employing the works of Richard Hooker as a lens to view the discourses of the period, one can better approach an understanding of Conformity prior to the English Revolution.¹ Second, it provides a taxonomy of the Cromwellian Church and its persecution of Conformists by exploring how Conformists endured during the period. The perseverance of Conformists amid the persecution of Cromwellian England was not arbitrary, but a disciplined reaction in which spiritual guidance was actively sought and developed. The issue of suppression not only molded a new form of Anglicanism in the Interregnum, but accentuated certain tenets in times of persecution instigated by the disestablishment of the Church of England. Together, both objectives establish a backdrop to how Conformists sought to preserve their faith during the Interregnum.²

¹ I owe thanks to Thomas Ryba for his assistance in helping me calibrate the theological nature of the Conformists. For more on Hooker's ecclesiastical thought see, Cornelius C. Simut, *The Doctrine of Salvation in the Sermons of Richard Hooker* (Boston: De Gruyter, Inc., 2012), 4-63; *Richard Hooker and his Early Doctrine of Justification. A Study of his Discourse of Justification* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 120-129. For a detailed examination of Hooker's view of tradition, see John K. Louma, "Who Owns the Fathers? Hooker and Cartwright on the Authority of the Primitive Church." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* VIII: 3 (1977), 45-60. For recent scholarship on Hooker's relationship between Scripture and reason, see Patrick Collinson, "Hooker and the Elizabethan Settlement," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed., Arthur Stephen McGrade (Tempe: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997), 149-183.

² Within the Church of England, a powerful plea for tolerance and reason came from Jeremy Taylor's book, *The Liberty of Prophesying* (London, 1650).

1.1 Calibrating Conformity: Richard Hooker

Richard Hooker was the first major voice of Anglican theology, and his defense of the Elizabethan Church against the attacks of the Puritans set the prevailing tone of Anglicanism throughout the seventeenth century. Although there exists a robust catalogue of clergymen whose works underpin the Church of England's faith, especially in the Elizabethan period, none held as much influence on Preservationism in the Interregnum era as did Hooker.³ Indeed, if Thomas Cranmer and Matthew Parker are the heart and spirit of the early national Church, Hooker manifests its intellectual and theological rigor.

In the late sixteenth century, Hooker was regarded by his contemporaries as a great apologist for the Elizabethan Settlement and the development of the Church of England.⁴ He was but one among the swelling number of young clergymen whose training at early Elizabethan Oxford permitted them to lead a Church very conscious of its place in the broader family of European Reformed Church.⁵ Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity* was the main authority of Ecclesiastical Polity: a majestic and hallowed testimony to the character of Anglicanism and the *via media* of the Church of England.⁶ Indeed, it is at once a systematic discussion of worship in the sixteenth-century Church of England, in its liturgical and theological aspects, and a volley in the polemical wars between Elizabethan Conformists and their Puritan

³ Ramie Targoff, *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 27-29.

⁴ M. R. Sommerville, "Richard Hooker and His Contemporaries on Episcopacy: an Elizabethan Consensus." *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 35, no. 2 (1984), 177-87. Ranall Ingalls, "Richard Hooker as Interpreter of the Reformed Doctrine of 'Sola Scriptura'." *Anglican and Episcopal History* 77, no. 4 (2008), 351-78.

⁵ Diarmaid MacCulloch, "Richard Hooker's Reputation," *The English Historical Review* 117, no. 473 (2002), 773-804.

⁶ Richard Hooker, *Of the laws of ecclesiastical polity: preface, book I, book VIII*, ed. Arthur Stephen McGrade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). MacCulloch, *Richard Hooker's Reputation*, 772. Revisionist historians have disputed the view that Hooker, presented the paradigm of an Anglican *via media* in his foundational works, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity* and *Discourse on Justification*. The disputes have centered on Hooker's doctrine of justification and the theology of the Eucharist. For some, such as Patrick Collinson and John Coolidge, Hooker embodies a strict constructionist approach. For others, such as James Cargill Thompson and Robert Eccleshall, Hooker is as an ideologue of the powers that were, a man who provided "window dressing for the command structure of Elizabethan society" and illustrates "a peculiarly English brand of national smugness regarding the native political system." Robert Eccleshall, "Richard Hooker and The Peculiarities of the English: The Reception of the "Ecclesiastical Polity" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *History of Political Thought* 2, no. 1 (1981), 63.

opponents. Hooker's is a systematic defense of the contemporaneous liturgy of the Church of England against particular objections. A defense, that at times strikes out in novel ways, as it argues in support of the use of a specifically prescribed form of worship. It is this pattern that will be analyzed in this chapter. Reason, human authority, and tradition are the tenets that the displaced Church of England followers clung on to during the Interregnum in the face of suppression.

Hooker, like his contemporary John Whitgift, was engaged in this controversy with the Puritans. Although, Hooker was spared the burdens of office and free to develop his thought without concern for its immediate political consequences, unlike Whitgift who was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in August 1583. In further contrast from Whitgift, and Puritans, Hooker considered reason as well as Scripture to be the source of ecclesiastical law and the means of coming to the knowledge of God. Furthermore, he held that the Roman Church was a true Latin persuasion, however perverted it might have become, and that the Church of England had not broken with that true, traditional establishment. Indeed, he held that ceremonies, especially the Eucharist and baptism, could inform as much or more than sermons.⁷

Hooker's writings appealed to Bishop Andrewes, and both James I and Charles I. His work also influenced liberal lay theologians of the Great Tew Circle; Edward Coke, champion of the common law and ancient constitution; Puritan Richard Baxter; Cromwellian John Hall; and philosopher John Locke. For the Church of England's followers, Hooker was regarded in high esteem. His status was so assured that, without any hint of sarcasm, Sir Robert Filmer made parallel assertions regarding Hooker about the authority of "Aristotle in natural philosophy . . . Hooker in divinity."⁸ Hooker was even widely respected and praised among opponents of the national Church. William Walwyn, for instance, a close confidant of John Lilburne, Leveller pamphleteer,

⁷ Rudolph Almasy, "The Purpose of Richard Hooker's Polemic." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 39, no. 2 (1978), 251-254.

⁸ Robert Filmer, *Filmer: 'Patriarcha' and Other Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7.

and popular agitator, recounted “as it were, without book, those pieces annexed to Mr. Hooker’s Ecclesiasticall policy: hearing, and reading continually.”⁹ Likewise, Pope Clement VIII, Hooker’s penultimate contemporary with whom he disagreed, said of *Of the Lawes*, “It has in it such seeds of eternity that it will abide until the last fire shall consume all learning.”¹⁰

1.1.1 Hooker’s Discourse: Difficulties and Methods

Sometime in the early 1620s, Archbishop James Ussher received from the Reverend Lancelot Andrewes, among many folios, a short manuscript belonging to the late Richard Hooker. The manuscript was a collection of untitled notes that Ussher kept before later preparing the volume for the local printer, Leonard Lichfield.¹¹ In 1641, the printer issued, under Ussher’s authority, a work called *Certain Briefe Treatises, written by diverse learned men, concerning the ancient and Modeme government of the Church*.¹² It is evident upon reading the treatise that Ussher held Hooker in high esteem. He regarded the priest as a speaker for the imminently disestablished Church, and he considered Hooker’s *Certain Briefe Treatises* as a weapon for those displaced. In his manuscript, Hooker praised the Church’s congregations for having done all they could in the face of those who would subvert the excellent order of episcopacy.¹³

⁹ William Walwyn, ed. *The Leveller Tracts, 1647-1653* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 362.

¹⁰ Alexander S. Rosenthal, *Crown Under Law: Richard Hooker, John Locke and the Ascent of Modern Constitutionalism* (Plymouth: Lexington Press, 2008), xiv.

¹¹ For an in-depth discussion on the impact of printers such as Lichfield, see Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press As an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Eisenstein’s concentration on the printing press’ impact on Western Europe suggests that print has always been seen as a radical force, an agent of social change. Much of Eisenstein’s proposition can be adapted to the impact of printing on the Royalist cause.

¹² *Certain Briefe Treatises* begins with a work by Lancelot Andrewes which vindicates the episcopal form of government, but as a preface to Andrewes’s treatise, as well as to the entire volume, Ussher prefixed the notes of Richard Hooker and titled them *The Causes of the continuance of these Contentions concerning Church- government*. See *Certain Briefe Treatises, Written by Diverse Learned Men, Concerning the Ancient and Moderne Government of the Church* (Oxford, 1641).

¹³ For scholarship on Hooker’s treatment of those who he considered opponents of the Church of England, see: Robert K. Faulkner, *Richard Hooker and the Politics of a Christian England* (California: University of California Press, 1981); Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason* (Vancouver: Regent Publishing Press, 2005); Michael Brydon, *The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker: An Examination of Responses, 1600–1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

The key to understanding Hooker's framework for salvation and preservation of the National Church's practices is to employ the principles set forth by intellectual and political scholar J.G.A. Pocock. Pocock urged specialists of the early modern era to observe the various texts that communicate in a particular discourse, one he referred to as a "polyvalent text."¹⁴ When applied, this permits one to comprehend what Hooker's drive or purposes were, who his audience was or who his audiences were, how he viewed or spoke to the various listeners who would read his treatise, and how he defined his opponents.¹⁵ Thus, polyvalent textuality lays clear Hooker's thesis in *Certain Briefe Treatises* as twofold. First, he infers that the only way to remove contention is through educating Presbyterians, and the established Church's other opponents. Second, he then dismisses that strategy as a failure, but not before positing that prayer is one hope that remains a vital instrument to the salvation of the national Church. Explicated further, he then clearly establishes the Church's theological position in *The Lawes*. Among the primary issues addressed within were the Book of Common Prayer; the episcopacy; the royal supremacy; the use of Scripture, reason, human authority, and tradition; and the position of the Roman Catholic Church within Christianity.¹⁶

1.1.2 Hooker's Theology

Hooker occupies the middle ground between Whitgift, who believed the Church of England should stand between Roman and Anabaptist, and Richard Bancroft, who wished to see the English

¹⁴ Polyvalent text refers to the multiplicity of potential meanings present in any manuscript. See J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 193-194.

¹⁵ Scholarly articles concentrating on political discourse by J.G.A Pocock include "British History: A Plea for a New Subject," *Journal of Modern History*, XLVII (1975): 601-28; "Reconstructing Historical Traditions (a review of Quentin Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*)," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, III (1979): 95-113; "Political Theory, History and Myth, a Salute to John Gunnell," *Annals of Scholarship*, 1 (1980): 3-25; "The History of British Political Thought: The Creation of a Center," *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985): 283-310; "Virtues, Rights, and Manners: A Model for Historians of Political Thought," *Political Theory*, IX (1981): 353-68. "Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought," in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 29.

¹⁶ Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*, 5-23.

Church located between Roman and Calvinian. The clergyman sought to distance himself from a Church which possessed Calvinist leanings, but which enjoyed being on the verge of sectarianism. He, therefore, stands within the Reformed tradition, although his theology is not classical Reformed and as a Calvinist, it neighbors Arminianism.¹⁷

Four main theological principles manifest in both the work of Hooker and the actions of the Conformists: the centrality of Scripture, the doctrine of Justification, the employment of Christology, and the route to salvation. Underlining these beliefs is his theology, a system neither exclusively biblical nor strictly rational. Hooker had a high regard for Scripture, as is evident from his emphasis on the perfection of Scripture. Three major hermeneutical presuppositions appear in Hooker's theology. First, Scripture is the literal Word of God and necessary for salvation. Second, Scripture does not consist exclusively of spiritual laws. Finally, Scripture has a divine author.¹⁸ These Christocentric principles lay at the foundation of Hooker's biblical interpretation.¹⁹ Thus, literal interpretation is subordinated to this Christocentric principle. Accordingly, the Church is indwelt by the redeeming presence of God found in Jesus Christ, and it is this presence that bears witness to the power of reason and revelation.²⁰ Both reason and revelation are to inform Christians, as well as transform them.

Stark differences exist in the differences between Hooker's theology and that of his opponents. The core difference between the theology of the Church of England and that of the Church of Rome is the doctrine of justification. Hooker analyzed the subject extensively, seeking to reconcile the conflict between the two churches. Seeking to explain the way in which God's

¹⁷ Peter Lake argues in favor of this belief after examining Hooker's robust Christocentric approach to salvation, which implies that Christ's death for all men opens the door to see every person as a potential member of Christ's Church. See Peter Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635," in *Reformation to Revolution. Politics and Religion in Early Modern England* edited by Margo Todd (London: Routledge, 1995), 179-207.

¹⁸ Nigel Voak, "Richard Hooker and the Principle of 'Sola Scriptura,'" *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series, 59, no. 1 (2008), 113.

¹⁹ Egil Grisliis, "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker," in *Studies in Richard Hooker*, edited by Cargill Thompson, 182.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 197.

salvation takes place within history, Hooker hoped to reflect both the Church of Rome as well as the Protestant Churches.²¹ Following his death in November 1600, Hooker's theology was still appreciated and employed by Calvinists during the Jacobean period.²² Calvinist theologians in England, like William Ames, came to conclude that Hooker was an apologist for the Church of England, even though the Church did not utilize his works in doctrines of crucial importance. Hooker also dismissed Lutheran theology, although he did weaponize Luther's viewpoints in his efforts to complete his case against the Church of Rome.²³

An equally important aspect linking both Hooker's and Conformist theology is Christology. Christology, the study of the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, is the essential dogma promoting the basis of the faith on the Word of God. Hence, Christology ascribes that the Christ is both the center and executor of God's plan of redemption from sin, and He is the only mediator between God and man.²⁴ For Conformists, this view is best seen in his belief that faith is valid, and the believer's salvation efficient, only when the individual is found in Christ.²⁵ In other words, salvation is always considered as the work of God in Christ, not the labor of the sinful human being. This indicates that Hooker's soteriology is firmly rooted in grace, not human justice. Humanity's responsibility is to have true and lively faith. However, even that faith which exists in man is not a part of man, but is also a gift from God. Such dogmatic principles are the case during the Interregnum as Conformists relied heavily upon the doctrine of salvation in their pursuance of preserving their Church.

A further crucial aspect of Hooker's doctrine of Scripture is that the Holy Scripture must be obeyed by Christians who desire to glorify God as Savior and Redeemer. Hooker, in particular,

²¹ Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 211.

²² Although the ceremonialist elements of his theology were not valued until the 1630s.

²³ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 533.

²⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1994), 2.

²⁵ Patrick Collinson posits that Christology is the most critical aspect of Hooker's doctrine of justification. See Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal 1519-1583. The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), 41.

sought to refute both the Catholic and Puritan views of Scripture.²⁶ He credited Henry VIII for “beheading superstition” and he deemed the Catholic understanding of Scripture insufficient due to its emphasis placed on supplementary tradition. He went so far as to refer to Rome’s judgments as “gross and grievous abominations” and that they were collectively “so many, so grievous errors in their doctrines.”²⁷ For their part, he also envisioned that the Puritans were adding unsubstantiated elements to Scripture as well. Hooker’s doctrine of Scripture has a pastoral touch that concerns itself with the consciences of weaker people.²⁸ Therefore, Scripture’s purpose is soteriological. It exists to give fallen humanity the knowledge necessary to obtain salvation.

1.1.3 Hooker’s Intellectualism

Hooker upheld the threefold authority of the Anglican tradition: the Bible, the Church, and reason. Roman Catholics set the Bible and an appeal to tradition on a parity as the authorities for belief, while Puritans looked to Scripture as the sole authority. Hooker avoided both extremes, insisting that a third element lay in human reason, which should be obeyed whenever both Scripture and tradition needed clarification or did not cover some new circumstance.²⁹ Hooker’s law of reason, like St. Thomas Aquinas’s law of nature, is derived from the eternal law by which God governs all things. The core of Hooker’s argumentation on the relations of Church and state was unity. In his view, the Puritans adopted an impossible position: they claimed to be loyal to Elizabeth I while repudiating her Church. By law and by reason, the people of England must adhere to the Church of England, pledging to serve Elizabeth as the supreme magistrate of the country and the supreme governor of the Church:

²⁶ Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*, 45-46.

²⁷ Hooker, *Of the laws of ecclesiastical polity*, IV:14.7, III:1.10.

²⁸ Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture*, 3. See also Peter Lake, *Anglicans, and Puritans? Presbyterians and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 151-163.

²⁹ Frederick C. Beiser, *The Sovereignty of Reason: The Defense of Rationality in the Early English Enlightenment* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 46-83.

Unto the word of God, being, in respect of that end for which God ordained it, perfect, exact, and absolute in itself, we do not add reason as a supplement of any maim or defect therein, but as a necessary instrument, without which we could not reap by the Scripture's perfection that fruit and benefit which it yielded.³⁰

Rooted within Hooker's philosophical discourse are also the teachings of Aquinas. Aquinas identifies the rational nature of human beings as that which defines moral law, the rule and measure of human acts is the reason, which is the first principle of human acts.³¹ Since human beings are by nature rational individuals, it is morally fitting that they should behave in a way that conforms to their reasonable nature. Thus, Aquinas derives the moral law from the nature of human beings. While Aquinas mentioned that sin affected the will, rather than reason, Hooker stated that sin affected both the will and reason.³² Therefore, human reason needs the support of God's grace. Through this grace of God, humanity can become united with God in a gradual manner and reach a state of incorruption.³³ Hooker held that the Puritans were correct in claiming that God should be glorified by all the actions of humanity, actions which must be modeled according to the law of God. Yet, the Puritans were wrong in their belief that Scripture is the only law of God that shapes human actions. God must receive glory for both natural and spiritual things.

In the culminating contribution to the debate concerning Scripture's meaning and the Church's discretionary authority in matters of liturgy and governance, Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* defended the predominant role of reason. In it, he argues that reason was not only presupposed for an accurate understanding of Scripture, but as competent to determine a broad range of issues not explicitly covered in Scripture. Indeed, Hooker claimed that the Church could prescribe contrary to biblical teaching if the purpose of the proscribed principle in its

³⁰ Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, II:8.10

³¹ Philip McCosker and Denys Tuner, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to the Summa Theologiae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 42-43.

³² Charles Miller, *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God: Exploring the Origins of Anglicanism* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2013), 194-197.

³³ Daniel Eppley, "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt: Private and Public Reason in Hooker's Hermeneutic," in *Reading the Bible with Richard Hooker* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2016), 113-166.

historical context could be understood to be irrelevant in current circumstances. With this, Conformists, who aligned with Hooker's reasoning, could mitigate their state of suppression through reason without biblical authority.

When issues of Church and State arose, Hooker championed the principle of unity. In his discourse, unity was the *via media* flanked by Puritans juxtaposed with the Roman Catholics.³⁴ Catholics placed the Bible and tradition as equal authorities for belief, while Puritans turned to Scripture as their sole authority. Against this, Hooker argued that the Puritans adopted an impossible position as they claimed to be loyal to the Crown while simultaneously repudiating the Church of England. Thus, unity was improbable, if not impossible, given these factors. If one were to pledge to serve the Crown as the supreme magistrate of the country and the supreme governor of the Church, by law and by reason, one would be, without question, a Conformist.³⁵

1.1.4 Hooker's Politics

Beyond the issue of theology, another shared belief between Conformists and Hooker was concerning political legitimacy. Hooker conveys an optimistic, or even sometimes idealistic, view of English political life.³⁶ For him, the basis for legitimate political power is the consent of the governed, a break with Aristotelian thought. The dilemma of regal sovereignty is challenged within a socially oriented analysis. Royal supremacy becomes a matter of socio-political effectiveness. According to Hooker, should all constituents of a realm profess the same religion, they will have the basic idea of living well, coordinating together their secular and spiritual goals. This harmonization of the secular and spiritual is a communal task, one in which common spirit trumps specific concerns of high politics. Similarly, then, Conformists ground their salvation attempts in

³⁴ Torrance Kirby, *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 116.

³⁵ Brian Tierney, "Richard Hooker," in *Liberty and Law* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 172-90.

³⁶ Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 1:xxiii.

local communities.³⁷ For example, Essex was “first for Parliament” during the Interregnum.³⁸ The county was long known as a hotbed for Puritanism. Despite such declared allegiances, though, it comprised of strong Conformist elements in which local leaders rallied underground to support displaced parishioners. Indeed, the pursuit of the emotional good, with a focus on the needs of the soul, is a fundamental characteristic of such a community.

In addition to discussing the Church’s theological position in *The Lawes*, Hooker covers Church governance in his work. He posited that the Puritan system of Church government was modeled on Calvin’s Church of Geneva.³⁹ He was also at odds with Puritans who maintained the view that no Church could claim to be Christian unless it followed Calvin’s construct.⁴⁰ The Puritans claimed that their approach to the governance of the Church conformed to Scripture. In turn, the English Church should be blamed for keeping the Episcopalian system of Church government so characteristic to Rome.⁴¹ Hooker responded that the polity of the Church of England was rooted in Natural Law, which is given by God. It follows, then, that the authority of Natural Law stands level with the authority of Scripture in matters of the organization of the Church polity. Additionally, there are essential differences between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, and the superficial resemblances between them do not cover what is doctrinally different in perspective. Hence, Hooker noted a dichotomy between the private and public by stating that the salvation of the individual did not depend on the reformation of a Church political, disciplinarian, or dogmatic system.⁴² Salvation rests internally in one’s private faith. He continued, arguing that the concern of individual Church members should be faith and doctrine, which may

³⁷ A view that this dissertation argues reverently.

³⁸ William Hunt, *The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), x.

³⁹ J. P. Sommerville, “Richard Hooker, Hadrian Savaria, and the Advent of the Divine Right of Kings,” *History of the Political Thought* IV, no. 2 (1983), 229-245.

⁴⁰ Specifically, that each congregation be governed by a group composed of two-thirds laymen elected annually by the congregation and one-third clergy serving for life.

⁴¹ W. B. Littlejohn, *The Peril and Promise of Christian Liberty: Richard Hooker, the Puritans, and Protestant Political Theology* (Michigan William B.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017).

⁴² Robert K. Faulkner, *Richard Hooker and the Politics of a Christian England*, 61-62.

be known readily, even if they are more challenging to perform. The focus of the Church as a corporate body should be the administrative organization, the ceremonies and the worship, the spirit of its laws and substance of its jurisdiction, and especially its relationship to the state.⁴³

An equally significant aspect of Hooker's politics was his views on counteracting or resisting religious intolerance. Hooker argued popular consent as the basis for political authority. He promoted the medieval corporation theory elaborated in twelfth- and thirteenth-century conciliarity theory, holding that a general council of the church has greater authority than the pope and may, if necessary, depose him. Unsurprisingly, then, he believed that the Papacy's power ought to be subject to juridical limitations. The Church of England kept the greatest resemblance to the Diocese of Rome in theology, ecclesiology, and institutional structure. Succinctly, Hooker cannot be regarded as wholly distant from the Roman Church in which he disapproved.⁴⁴ Indeed, the shared heritage between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England would become polemicized in the culture wars of the Interregnum.

1.2 Tolerance and Intolerance in Revolutionary England (1637-1660)

Conversely, Hooker's theories represented stability and continuity. During the Civil Wars that engulfed the Kingdoms of England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland between 1642-1651, Cromwell played a pivotal role as a military leader. Fighting for the Puritan cause against the royal house of Stuart, he represented a devout believer and a general in command of his troops. As Cromwell reflected on the cause of these wars, he concluded that one of the main reasons that he and many others had taken up the sword against their king was to achieve religious liberty. Yet, the terms of that liberty remain contentious. Scholars of the period continue to quarrel over the

⁴³ Sheldon S. Wolin, "Richard Hooker and English Conservatism," *The Western Political Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (1953), 34.

⁴⁴ Arthur P. Monahan, "Richard Hooker: Counter-Reformation Political Thinker," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. Arthur S. McGrade, 203-218.

true nature of Cromwell's policy of religious tolerance.⁴⁵ Despite the disputes, it remains clear that since the Elizabethan era Dissenting groups endured, calling for a more significant measure of tolerance. And, it is undeniable that Cromwell had contact with some of these more liberally minded voices during his drive to bring a lasting religious and political settlement to the kingdoms.⁴⁶

1.2.1 The Church of England on the eve of the Civil Wars, 1637-1639

The religious settlement of England was profoundly affected by the cataclysmic events of the mid-seventeenth century: civil warfare, the regicide of Charles I, and the subsequent attempt to establish a Godly commonwealth administered by Oliver Cromwell. Charles I was king not only of England but also of Scotland, and it was events in Scotland that precipitated the war in England. In 1637, Charles decided to impose an English-style Prayer Book on the Presbyterian Scots. He did not consult them about his plans and the Scots rightly concluded that he valued neither them nor their system of Church government. As a result, the Scots drew up a national covenant in defense of their Church and took up arms against the king. Rebellion in Scotland forced Charles to summon a Parliament at Westminster for the first time in eleven years. Indeed, the King needed money to pay troops to suppress the rebellious Scots, but members of Parliament were unwilling to grant a levy and instead took the opportunity to seek redress for their own

⁴⁵ George A. Drake, "Oliver Cromwell and the Quest for Religious Toleration" in *The Impact of the Church Upon Its Culture*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 267-291; Blair Worden, "Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate" in *Persecution and Toleration*, W. J. Sheils (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1984), 199-233; J. C. Davis, "Cromwell's Religion" in *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, ed. John Morrill (London: Longman, 1990), 191-199.

⁴⁶ J. C. Davis, "Religion and the Struggle for Freedom in the English Revolution." *The Historical Journal* 35, no. 3 (1992), 507-30; Peter Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Giuseppina Iacono Lobo, "John Milton, Oliver Cromwell, and the Cause of Conscience," *Studies in Philology* 112, no. 4 (2015): 774 – 97; W. K. Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932); John Morrill, "The Religious Context of the English Civil War," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 34 (1984), 155-78; Margaret Spufford, "Puritanism and social control?," in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, eds. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 41-57; Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

grievances.⁴⁷ Like the Scots, the English resented the authoritarian nature of Charles's rule. Ruling under a claim of Divine Right of King's doctrine, Charles believed those who opposed him also conflicted with God's rule. Complicating matters further, opposition to his authoritarian rule mixed with doubts regarding his loyalty to England's Protestant settlements. Charles' wife, Henrietta Maria of France, was Catholic which instigated concern that the King might be a pawn of the Pope and that England might once again be subjected to "papal tyranny."⁴⁸

Notwithstanding an ever-growing sense of unease about the King's attitudes, many English people still felt a strong and instinctive loyalty to the Crown. On the eve of the Civil Wars, many attributed Charles' shortcomings to bad advice from his counselors. Archbishop William Laud, who exercised considerable power over both secular and religious affairs, served as a prime example of an advisor the public assumed gave ill advice to the King. Laud was a logical focusing point of antipathy for those feeling alienated. A constant enemy of the Puritans, he undermined traditional Calvinist teachings and was popularly branded as a conspirator involved in the Catholic renewal of Protestant England. Further, Laud introduced controversial innovations in worship that many believed harkened back to Catholic practice. Altars were required to be railed in and communicants instructed to kneel to receive the Sacrament. Churchgoers were expected to stand during the Creed, the Epistle, and the Gospel. The wearing of hats in Church, a common practice at that time, was forbidden. Indeed, as Archbishop of Canterbury and religious adviser to Charles, Laud clearly exercised considerable power. Many of these innovations were utilized by Conformists during the Interregnum as a method to preserve Church practices. Religion was more than mere personal faith and doctrinal practices. It incorporated cosmic views on such matters as the proper relationship between Church and State, the governor and governed, order and hierarchy,

⁴⁷ Christopher Haigh, "The Church of England, The Catholics, and the People," in *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640*, edited by Peter Marshall (London: Arnold, 1997), 235-255.

⁴⁸ Clement Fatovic, "The Anti-Catholic Roots of Liberal and Republican Conceptions of Freedom in English Political Thought." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 66, no. 1 (2005), 41.

which Charles defended as firmly as he did his understandings of the spiritual tenets of the Church of England.⁴⁹

As the Civil Wars loomed, Charles' religiosity was tested, standing as a clear fracture point for disagreement in his government. When the Long Parliament assembled in November 1640, Charles requested the passing of finance bills in place of the unpopular taxation of ship money, his coffers exhausted as a result of prosecuting the Bishops' Wars.⁵⁰ However, Puritan opponents in Parliament of both Charles and Laud dominated the congregation's agenda. Westminster quickly proceeded to impeach Laud for high treason on 18 December 1641, rather than humor the Crown's pecuniary requests. MPs were responding to an earlier call in the previous December. Specifically, parish communities that had suffered most under Laudianism and were the most hostile to Arminian initiatives came to feel that the problem facing England lay not with individual clerics, but with the entire episcopal order, opting to support a called to abolish it completely.⁵¹ Indeed, just within the environs of the City itself, the citizens of London presented a petition with 15,000 signatures to Parliament calling for such drastic measures. Known as the "Root and Branch Petition," it called for a sweeping away of the existing Church hierarchy, down to its "roots and branches."⁵² Nonplussed, Charles remained resolute and continued to conclude that any subjects who challenged his authority must be crushed, by force of arms if necessary. Thus, on the eve of the Civil Wars, the English were led by a king who would not compromise or negotiate, whose seemingly Catholic sympathies threatened the entire country. In response, some English took the previously unthinkable step of raising arms against their monarch, claims of divinity be damned.

⁴⁹ David Cressy, *Charles I and the People of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 42-45.

⁵⁰ Mark Charles Fissel, *The Bishops' Wars: Charles I's Campaigns against Scotland, 1638-1640* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 45.

⁵¹ Anthony Milton, *Laudian and Royalist Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: The Career and Writings of Peter* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 107; Charles Carlton, *Archbishop William Laud* (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1987), 55.

⁵² Peter Lake, "Puritans, Popularity and Petitions," in *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honor of Conrad Russell*, eds., Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake (London: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 265.

The forming of these rebellious armies was but one aspect of a growing wave of protest, albeit radical, which swept across England in the early 1640s. At a parochial level, the discrediting of Laud unleashed a violent reaction against the practices he had introduced. Parishioners took the law into their own hands and tore down detested altar rails. Some chopped them into pieces and burnt them, as is the case in the parish of Alderton, Suffolk, starting scenes of noisy celebration and drinking. When an anonymous clergyman at St Olave's, Southwark refused to serve two men who wanted to take communion seated, a crowd dragged him around the Church by his surplice. Hecklers challenged communicants who knelt to receive the sacrament, "Why do you suffer Baal's priest to give you the communion and serve you? Kick him out of the Church, should he attempt to kneel to a pope, then we must hang him."⁵³ This division of opinion in the countryside was further reflected in Parliament. MPs recognized that some reform to end the Laudian experiment was necessary, but opinions differed about the extent of such reforms. Some Parliamentarians, such as John Lambert and Henry Ireton, sought to return to the Church of Elizabeth and James. Others, such as Francis Brewster and John Clarke, wanted to pursue further radical change. These MPs were sympathetic to the Puritans, envisaging the fracturing of the Church establishment as an opportunity granted by God to reform. In Puritan eyes, such grand opportunities in this tumult created obligations on the leadership to fix society, and Godly reform was the antidote de jure to the growing chaos.⁵⁴

1.2.2 Civil War England and the Church, 1639-1649

In *Behemoth*, Thomas Hobbes proposed that the decades between 1640-1660 might be taken as the "highest of time" in which was concentrated all manner of social disorder. Hence, his assessment of the "causes" of the English Civil Wars became a study in the subversion of, and

⁵³ House of Lords Record Office, Braye MS 19, (17 June 1641).

⁵⁴ David R. Como, *Radical Parliamentarians and the English Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2-14.

eventual return to, established order.⁵⁵ Hobbes's posited a fundamental question: how was it possible for a stable country to be reduced to virtual chaos despite its six-hundred-year-old monarchy and large army?⁵⁶ Applying his understanding of human nature to explain why the English Civil Wars happened, Hobbes identified both religion and politics as the primary reason for the wars. The political causes centered on the king's inability to have his source of revenues to conduct state business, complicated by the fact that subjects were unaware that they had an obligation to obey the sovereign in all matters. Conversely, England's religious problems were an intricate web, weaved together by matters relating to both doctrinal disputes and divine authority. These disputes derived from mutually exclusive and subversive doctrines taught by the three main parties to the religious settlement: Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, and Independents/Puritans. As Hobbes lamented, it was the failure of political and ecclesiastical authorities to submit to Puritan demands for more extensive reform that emerged as the primary cause of open warfare.⁵⁷

Indeed, during the chaos of the early 1640s, much of the machinery of the Church government collapsed. The Church courts, perpetually disdained and disapproved of by the Puritans, stopped functioning altogether. The injunctions issued by the House of Commons in 1641, designed to eliminate any action or practice which might be deemed to encourage

⁵⁵ Hobbes emerged as a leading proponent of natural rights, stating that every human being has the right to put into practice their talents for the sake of self-preservation and development. Writing in the wake of the Civil War, Hobbes postulated what life would be like without government, a condition, which he calls the "state of nature." In this state, each person could do whatever he/she pleases. This inevitably leads to conflict, a "war of all against all." Left unrestrained, humans, propelled by their internal dynamics, would clash against each other. His conclusion was dispiriting. Indeed, according to Hobbes, life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short," a war of every man against every man." Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil—commonly referred to as Leviathan* (1651), 56. For more regarding Hobbes and the English Civil War, see: Donald W. Hanson, "Thomas Hobbes on 'Discourse' in Politics Polity," *Palgrave Macmillan Journals*, 24 (1991), 99-226; Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Peter Zagorin, *Hobbes and the Law of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton university Press, 2009); A.P. Martinich, *Hobbes: The Routledge Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 2005); Howard Warrender, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

⁵⁶ Hobbes also questioned whether people learned from violence of the wars, "the Civil Wars have not yet sufficiently taught men in what point of time it is that a subject becomes obliged to the conqueror; nor what is conquest; nor how it comes about, that it obliges men to obey its laws." Hobbes, *Leviathan, A Review and Conclusion*.

⁵⁷ Jules Steinberg, *The Obsession of Thomas Hobbes: the English Civil War in Hobbes's Political Philosophy* (New York: Lang, 1988), 109-110.

superstition, had ended the purview of the clergy's judiciary over society. Simultaneously, parish officials were ordered to remove not only altar rails, but also crucifixes and any remaining iconography.⁵⁸ Local communities, despite dismantling altar rails, had no desire to inflict damage of this sort on their ceremonial objects and some refused to cooperate with Parliamentary commissioners. Their resistance was met with increased political hostility, and secular consequence, as the decade unfolded.

With the outbreak of the Civil Wars in 1642, England dissolved into more than political and social upheavals. The new and uncontrollable situation produced ideological bewilderment. Conversely, Hooker's theories represented stability and continuity. To avoid the limits of worship enforced upon the displaced communities of the Isles, Conformists sought their own via media through an offer of benevolent guidance. As such, Hooker was regarded as a leader whose teachings underlined the very character that defined the Church of England. Hooker's uniqueness as a luminary in a chaotic period was reflected in his discussion of common prayer. In contrast to the Conformists who had gone before him, and to the Puritans alike, Hooker placed common prayer at the pinnacle of Christian life. Common prayer was championed as something that outshone both sermons and private devotions in its importance to the individual believer and the overall Church.

Conformists and Roman Catholics, both tainted by their devotion to the exiled Stuarts, were neglected and persecuted by the government. This became a more significant matter as their mistreatment clashed with Cromwell's often-repeated declarations of toleration. As early as 1644, he expressed himself as favoring "a liberty for all religions out any exceptions."⁵⁹ Whether he meant all religions is doubtful considering the persecution of both congregations. The

⁵⁸ Carvings of saints on fonts had often escaped previous purges, as had some pictures in the Church's narthex. Furthermore, the eyes of carved or painted saints were gouged out and their faces disfigured, making it difficult for worshippers to see them as people who might act as intermediaries before God.

⁵⁹ Jordan, *The Development of Religious Toleration in England*, 54-55.

Independents and the Baptists in his army, who prayed, preached, and fought with great fervor, came to represent true piety. Indeed, the sectaries brought Cromwell into power, and the Protector could not afford to neglect them if he wished to keep his authority.

Cromwellian England stood as a crucible for religious persecution under the façade of religious liberation. Cromwell's alleged "religious freedom" led to a trichotomy of national, local, and personal identity. Protector Cromwell claimed to be creating an environment engrossed in religious tolerance. From this conceptualization of tolerance, defined by Cromwell, some historians have justified Cromwell's violence. These scholars argue that Cromwell held violent force as necessary to produce liberty.⁶⁰ While such arguments hold considerable merit, this religious tolerance also acted as a front. It also fashioned a complex system of private and public religious identity, which Puritan ministers utilized in aiding Church of England members seeking Conformity.

This desecration was not limited to the Church's iconography, vestments, and structures as it soon expanded to the Church building themselves. Even the very structures of the episcopacy were attacked. Cathedrals were burned or partially razed, seen as representational of a bishopric's seat and, resultantly, as ready targets for soldiers and citizens against any symbol of authority. Soldiers who had believed in earlier times that it was superstitious to treat Churches as anything other than sacred places began to stable their horses in the previously sacrosanct buildings. The invasion of holy sites and spaces persisted as growing discontent found expression, facilitating the dismantling of the Church of England.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Micheál Ó Siochrú, *God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* (Dublin: Faber & Faber, 2008); John Cunningham, "Oliver Cromwell and The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland," *The Historical Journal* 53:4 (2010), 919-937; Barbara Donagan, "The Web of Honour: Soldiers, Christians, and Gentlemen in the English Civil War," *Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), 365-8; J. C. Davis, *Oliver Cromwell* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 2001); Ian Gentles, *Oliver Cromwell: God's Warrior and the English Revolution* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁶¹ John F. Wilson, *Pulpit in Parliament: Puritanism During the English Civil Wars, 1640-1648* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 21-25.

The restructuring of the national Church following these demolitions was primarily dictated by the influx of Puritan values, seizing on the slow erosion of the Church's former beliefs. To that task, the greatest catalyst for Puritans to seize the moment was encapsulated in the beheading of Archbishop Laud on 10 January 1645. The English political, religious, and social landscape resembled *a world upside down*. After all, Laud was instrumental in establishing in the Church of England specific practices that resembled Roman Catholic worship, which had greatly agitated Puritans. Those Puritans, who had once muted their public criticisms of the English Church, had done so to maintain a common cause against the Catholic threat. Laud's execution changed the dynamics of the growing conflict and gave the Puritan movement a means to project their dissatisfaction. His death also brought an abrupt end to the office of Archbishop of Canterbury, as the position was abolished the following year at the behest of Puritanical zeal.

1.2.3 The Cromwellian Church, 1649-1660

The inconceivable act of regicide freed the English to think unimaginable thoughts. The events of January 1649 form a truly revolutionary moment in English history. The abolition of monarchy, the termination of the House of Lords, the closely linked disestablishment of the Church of England and of the principle that all Englishmen and women ought to be members of a single national Church eroded the fabric of English society. These episodes represent the destruction of those very institutions around which men and women organized their view of the natural order in the world. Despite these victories, one issue remained unsolved. In 1652, John Milton reminded Cromwell that the chief end for which the Civil War had been fought, to gain religious liberty, had not yet been reached.⁶²

⁶² "New foes arise, threatening to bind our souls with secular chains. Help us to save free conscience from the paw Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw." John Milton, *To the Lord General Cromwell, on the Proposals of Certain Ministers at the Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel* 1652), i.

With the Church of England disestablished, questions over its successor proliferate. Once Parliament had been purged of the elements most hostile to the army and once the king had been executed, little prevented the implementation of the army's desire for some form of religious toleration for Protestants. In September 1650 the Rump, in the Act for the Relief of Religious and Peaceable People, repealed the Elizabethan Act of uniformity and the Act for the punishing of persons willfully refusing to come to Church.⁶³ With this, Parliament relieved citizens from the legal obligation of attending their parish Churches.

Therefore I beseech you, have u care of the whole flock! Love the sheep, love the lambs; love all, tender all, cherish and countenance all, in all things that aw good. And if the poorest Christian, the most mistaken Christian, shall desire to live peaceably and quietly under you - I say, if any shall desire to lead a life of godliness and honesty, let him be protested.⁶⁴

Despite the successes of the Parliament in the opening months of the Interregnum, Cromwell resembled a frustrated figure.⁶⁵ It became clear by early 1650s that the most significant threat to religion was a lack of order and government in the Church. Thus, when Cromwell became Lord Protector in 1653, no problem seemed graver to him than that of restoring order in the Church. From the onset, though, the Protector was met with mounting difficulties. The Directory was not universally used. The sacrament of the Eucharist was rarely administered because of the disagreement over who had the power of excommunication. As for baptism, the misgivings of the Calvinists over who should be baptized, and the refusal of the Baptists to administer the rite to any

⁶³ *An Act for Relief of Religious and Peaceable People From the Rigor of Former Acts of Parliament in Matters of Religion* (27 September 1650).

⁶⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches: With Elucidations*, 2 vols. (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1845), 2:48.

⁶⁵ On the national Church under Cromwell, see E. W. Kirby, "The Cromwellian Establishment," *Church History*, 10 (1941), 144-58; Austin Woolrych, "Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Saints," in *The English Civil War and After, 1642-1658*, ed. R. H. Parry (London: Macmillan, 1970), 59-77. Blair Worden, "Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate," in *Persecution and Toleration* edited by W. I. Sheils (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 199-23; Ann Hughes, "Frustrations of the Godly," in *John Revolution and Restoration in the 1650s*, ed. John Morrill (London: Collins & Brown, 1992), 70-90; Christopher Durston, "Policing the Cromwellian Church: The Activities of the County Ejection Committees, 1654-1659," in *The Cromwellian Protectorate*, ed. Patrick Little (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).

except Godly adults, resulted in the fact that even that sacrament was no longer dispensed. Furthermore, Cromwellian officials continued to clash with the sectaries, Roman Catholics, and those wishing to preserve the disestablished practices of the Church. Roman Catholics persisted in their ways, as their priests benefited by the chaotic conditions spurred on by disordered nature of the Interregnum.

How broad a toleration Cromwell favored is not clear, but from his speeches and writings, he appears as a strict Calvinist who was an Erastian in so far as he advocated for the responsibility of the state to maintain order in the Church. The Instrument of Government, which brought Cromwell to power in 1653, centered on the provision that the supreme legislative authority should be shared by “a single person” (albeit a Lord Protector, not a monarch) and “the people assembled in Parliament.”⁶⁶ The Instrument also outlined decrees relating to the matter of religious toleration. The 37th Clause of the Instrument, for instance, declared:

That such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ-though differing in judgment from the doctrine, worship, or discipline publicly held forth-shall not be restrained from, but shall be protected in, the profession of the faith and exercise of their religion; so as they abuse not this liberty to the civil liberty of others and the actual disturbance of the public peace on their parts; provided this liberty be not extended to Popery or prelacy, nor to such as, under the profession of Christ, hold forth and practice licentiousness.⁶⁷

Furthermore, the Christian religion, as contained in the Bible, was to be “the public profession of these Nations,” and provision was to be made for its maintenance. However, no one was to be forced to attend the established Church. All who “professed faith in God by Jesus Christ shall be protected in the profession of their faith and exercise of their religion in any place except such as shall be set apart for the public worship.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ The Humble Petition and Advice would later replace the Instrument in 1657, supplying looser constitutional prescriptions than its predecessor and left more to the ruler’s discretion. See Blair Worden, *God’s Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁶⁷ The “Instrument of Government” in *The Stuart Constitution 1603-1688*, ed. J.P. Kenyon (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966), 347.

⁶⁸ *An Agreement of the People for a firm and present Peace* (1647), [E., 412, 21].

Cromwell constantly strove to promote unity in his promoting of toleration, often promoting harmony between Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist clerics by discussing matters of common religious concern. He firmly believed that the duty of the State was to give adequate maintenance for its clergy. From early in the Civil War, with the establishment of the Committee for Plundered Ministers, Parliament had taken pains that loyal ministers should receive an adequate recompense. Moreover, when from 1649 the State began to sell episcopal and capitular lands, Cromwell had set aside certain income to produce a considerable fund to augment poorer livings. Under these circumstances, a Commonwealth parish minister could hope to obtain grants to bring his annual income to about £100 a year; one incumbent who recorded the payment of his augmentation was the diarist Ralph Josselin. In addition to the maintenance of the clergy, two other Cromwellian innovations were implemented in the form of “tryers” and “ejectors,” both of which developed from suggestions first made by members of the Rump in 1652. Both innovations appeared as a framework in Cromwell’s Church. The tryers who met in London to examine all men looking to enter the ministry of the national Church. Characteristically Cromwell persuaded Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists to act on his board of tryers. His measure for removing immoral clergymen out of the Church, above most of his acts, has been misrepresented and condemned. For some, however, Cromwell’s actions were lauded. Richard Baxter, an adversary of Cromwell, even acknowledged the extent and value of their activities:

They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers that sort of men who intend no more in the ministry than to say a sermon, as readers say their common prayers... so that, though they were many of them somewhat partial for the Independents, Separatists, Fifth Monarchy men and Anabaptists, and against the Prelatists and Arminians, yet so great was the benefit above the hurt which they brought to the Church, that many thousands of souls blessed God for the faithful ministers whom they let in, and grieved when the Prelatists afterward cast them out again.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Richard Baxter, Neil Keeble, and Joseph Morgan Lloyd Thomas, eds. *The Autobiography of Richard Baxter* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1974), 70-71.

The ejectors, in contrast, were organized on a county basis to remove unworthy ministers still in possession of livings, resembled the work of earlier Parliamentary committees. This body, it must be noted, was chosen by Parliament, not by Cromwell. The grounds for ejection were explicitly counted, ranging from immoral actions to use of the Book of Common Prayer, from cynicism to the government to the encouraging of maypoles.⁷⁰

On 3 September 1654, Oliver Cromwell addressed the First Protectorate Parliament at its inaugural meeting. The Lord Protector prefaced his speech to Parliament with a passionate yearning for an atmosphere of absolute religious toleration.

Again, is not Liberty of Conscience in religion a fundamental? So long as there is liberty of conscience for the supreme magistrate to exercise his conscience in erecting what form of Church-Government he is satisfied he should set up, why should not he give it to others? Liberty of conscience is a natural right... All the money of this nation would not have tempted men to fight upon such an account as they have engaged, if they had not had hopes of liberty, better than they had from Episcopacy, or than would have been afforded them from a Scottish Presbytery, or an English either... This, I say, is a Fundamental.⁷¹

Throughout the planning and framing of the Cromwellian Church, the Protector continued to debate with Parliament on matters relating to the divine. When Cromwell's first Parliament met in September 1654, it fully encompassed Members of the Rump, "Commonwealthmen," angered by his dissolution of their government. They impeded proceedings over the next months as they discussed little else but plans to change the Instrument to the advantage of Parliament.⁷² Cromwell dissolved this Parliament, which failed to pass any laws during its entire sitting, in January 1655.⁷³ In a fiery speech aimed at the dissolution, he explained his dream of a national Church and rebuked Parliament because it had failed to help him achieve it. "Such good and wholesome provisions for the settling of such matters in things of Religion," should have been made "as would have upheld

⁷⁰ Kirby, 151.

⁷¹ Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, 2:121.

⁷² *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic* (hereinafter *CSPD*), 1654, 27, 33, 40.

⁷³ Oliver Cromwell, *Speech Dissolving The Rump Parliament* (London: April 20, 1653); Neil Forsyth, *John Milton: A Biography* (London: Lion UK, 2009), 120-125.

and given Countenance to a Godly Ministry,” and yet would have given “a just liberty to men of different judgments.” He spoke with approval of the godly sectarians, the Independents and “many under the form of Baptism,” and, by implication, the Presbyterians. He further addressed the issue of toleration, asserting that “profane persons, blasphemers, such as preach sedition; the contentious revilers, evil speakers” should be punished. He insisted that men in “disputable things” should be left to “their own consciences.”⁷⁴ The Instrument of Government, he declared, had instigated provisions for toleration, and Parliament ought to have acted in accordance to these arrangements. Now that Parliament had failed, in his estimation, to support the government of the new national Church, he proceeded to rule it according to his ideas. Thus, the faith of Conformists rested with Cromwell himself.

1.2.4 The Necessity of Preservation in Cromwellian England

With the framework of Cromwell’s Church erected, what did this mean for those still holding firmly to old beliefs in the form of the national Church? Many clergymen faced ejection during 1653-1658. While no creed and no liturgy bound men’s consciences, a new standard was fashioned. Loyalty to the new government became the foremost important quality of a clergyman. The mere use Book of Common Prayer was enough to guarantee the expulsion of these ministers. Where Cromwell was vague about his newly established Church, he was very precise about the old establishment. When those protesting were Conformists, as happened in Baxter’s parish in Kidderminster, for instance, they were made Churchless.

Furthermore, Church of England clergymen who had survived the ejection of the 1640s and 1654 were now, predominantly so, targeted because of Penruddock’s Rebellion of 1655.⁷⁵ This Royalist uprising was the symptom of unrest caused by the authority by which Cromwell

⁷⁴ Carlyle, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, 2:44.

⁷⁵ For more see: Peter Newman, *Atlas of the English Civil War* (London: Routledge, 1985); David Underdown, *Royalist Conspiracy in England 1649-60* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960).

enforced, a military authority, a body hitherto unheard of in England. Although the Royalist uprising proved unsuccessful, it affected security measures within the Protectorate. Widespread arrests followed, and Cromwell's attitude hardened. Six months after Penruddock's Uprising, all impression of liberty vanished when Cromwell mapped out the country into eleven military districts. A major-general was installed in each region as the supreme administrative authority. This action made Cromwell's Puritan rule repressive, undermining his initial endorsing of toleration, and confirmed the people's conviction that standing armies were dangerous to their rights.

Amid the Protectorate's ever restricting policies regarding toleration, Conformists refused to abandon their parish Church, but instead continued to adhere to the Church of England's practices and sought to preserve their religion notwithstanding Parliament's ordinances. By ordinance, Cromwell established what had been the status quo, a Presbyterian Church with toleration for Protestant Dissenters. Politically dangerous Catholics were excluded, but they were not actively pursued as was the case with those still adhering to the old faith. The necessity for preservation was therefore heightened as the Commonwealth continued to implement greater refinements to practices they deemed acceptable.⁷⁶ Indeed, those who defied such restrictions did so knowing the potential implications of their actions. Imprisonment and hefty fines, for example, awaited those who partook in private service. Yet, regardless of such repercussions, many decided to continue to use the Book of Common Prayer in their parishes, irrespective of the consequences.

⁷⁶ Ordinances enacted by Parliament which sought to intervene in Anglican practices include, but are not limited to: *Ordinance for taking away the Book of Common Prayer and putting in Execution the Directory for the Public Worship of God* (4 January 1644/5), *Act against several atheistic, blasphemous and execrable opinions derogatory to the honour of God, and destructive to human society* (9 August 1650), *Act touching Marriages and the registering thereof, and also touching Birth and Burials* (24 August 1653), *Act for the promoting and more frequent Preaching of the Gospel and better maintenance of a Godly ministry in the Borough of Plymouth* (passed 14 March 1656-7).

1.3 Conclusion

The executions of Archbishop William Laud in 1645 and of King Charles I four years later facilitated the successive religious changes imposed by new authorities. By Land's death, episcopacy, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Articles of Religion had been replaced under Parliamentary ordinances by a Presbyterian ministry, a reformed Directory of Public Worship, and the majestic Calvinist Westminster Confession of Faith. By Charles's death, Oliver Cromwell had repudiated the rigid imposition of Presbyterianism in favor of the policies of the Independents. Cromwell's self-styled tolerance towards "tender consciences" had very narrow acceptable limits between Presbyterianism and Independency.⁷⁷ But, as this project will highlight, Puritans were confronted with great difficulty in preventing Conformist practices in small local parishes. The Prayer Book continued to be used, baptism was sustained, the Eucharist was administered, and the dead were buried in private services. Large conventicles of the disestablished Church travelled to partake in these rituals throughout East Anglia. Starting with Cambridgeshire, the following four chapters depict a series of portraits displaying how Conformists navigated the Cromwellian labyrinth of intolerance in pursuance of their own religious liberation.

⁷⁷ Blair Worden, *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 199-233.

CHAPTER 2. CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Everyone was afraid to give us shelter. My father had a sister in town who was married to one Mr. John Lass, but they troubled him many ways for harboring us. They ridiculed him, and they sent a bell man about the town to tell everyone.¹

With that statement, Frances Manby recounted the suffering that her family experienced at the hands of overzealous enemies of the Church.² Frances Manby was the daughter of John Manby, the ejected rector of the small village of Cottenham in Cambridgeshire. Her accounting of the woes her family faced would continue as she recalled that other children in the parish were also prompted by their parents to exclude her from their games. Such poignant ostracization is indicative of the nature of being associated with the then displaced Church. The families of clergymen were not spared in the anguish of the Church as the fissures of the Commonwealth continued to rip at the fabric of English religious life.

Nevertheless, despite such provocations, many clergymen continued to serve their Churches throughout the Interregnum. They overcame their deep reservations about cooperating with the Puritan and protectoral regimes overseen by Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell by emphasizing their continuing duty to provide pastoral care to their parishioners. Retired bishops, such as Robert Skinner of Oxford, assisted local clergies by expanding their ranks via a stream of new conservative recruits. Such pastoral care as seen in Cambridgeshire is a further testament to the inability of the Godly rulers to transform the parochial ministry into a taskforce which was prepared to implement their religious vision.³ Just like Laud in the 1630s, the Godly rulers of the Interregnum were ineffective on this front.

¹ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker fols. C2, fol. 26.

² I would like to thank Tim Harris for his comments and critiques on an early version of this chapter presented at the Northeast Conference on British Studies. His comments regarding the Conformist activity at Cambridge University was particularly helpful.

³ Susan Doran and Christopher Durston, *Princes, Pastors and People: The Church and Religion in England, 1500-1689* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 177-178.

This chapter examines the state of the Church of England in Cambridgeshire during the Interregnum. In Cambridgeshire, a Parliamentary committee was set up at the start of the Long Parliament in November 1640 to investigate the general state of religion. Governmental ordinances enforced by the committee established new religious policies against episcopacy, ceremonialism and “idolatry.”⁴ By 1645, the oversight would fashion the most significant changes on the local parish. Specifically, a bill for the sale of episcopal lands, a ban on the Book of Common Prayer, and its replacement with a Directory of Public Worship.⁵ Thus, the fundamentals of Church ritual were attacked including the forms of baptism, funeral, and marriage. Clergymen still using the Prayer Book rites risked fines, imprisonment and sequestration.

Such punishments were often a consequence of public remonstrating. Often those who openly mocked opponents risked fines, imprisonment, or both. Should a Conformist be found protesting in such a matter, they were often summoned before county committees. The clergy was thus criticized for their aversion towards godly practices. In the local county court, accusations had their own set of Puritan laws. Strikes were made against ministers who chose to recite rehearsed sermons, not preaching well or often enough, or twice on Sunday. Cambridgeshire clergyman Thomas Lee, for example, was accused of having openly ridiculed one Stoneham, a Puritan preacher, during his sermon. While Stoneham pontificated and looked to prove doctrine by inciting scripture, Lee openly refuting his preaching to his “pew fellows” using the Bible and “thumping” his fist in defiance of the ongoing sermon.⁶ What happened to Lee following his

⁴ Between 1641 and 1660, around 2,425 benefices were sequestered, 28 per cent of the 8,600 in England; around 2,780 men were ejected or seriously “harassed,” with sequestrations peaking in the years 1646–47. For more on these statistics, see Ian Green, “The Persecution of ‘scandalous’ and ‘malignant’ parish clergy during the English Civil War,” *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 507-531.

⁵ Although Conformist opponents frequently complained of the Churches “episcopal” “ceremonious,” or “popish” nature, they never used the word “Laudian.” The term itself post-dates the Restoration. The first known first known exact usage by Richard Baxter in 1691. Calvin Lane, *The Laudians and the Elizabethan Church: History, Conformity and Religious Identity in Post-Reformation England* (London: Routledge, 2016), 163. For more on Baxter and his reflections on popery, see William Lamont, “Richard Baxter, ‘Popery’ and the Origins of the English Civil War,” *History*, 87, no. 287 (2002), 336-52.

⁶ BL, Add. 15,672, fol. 14.

outburst is unknown. What can be insinuated from this incident is that he was most likely reprimanded and fined for his outburst. Lee's protesting is indicative of the risk that Conformists were willing to take as they sought to defend their Church by protesting what they believed to be false doctrines. However, not all Conformists dared not to publicly protest in fear of persecution. Such hesitations are not surprising given the extent of instances involving the taunting of Conformist families and the destruction of the sacred in local parishes throughout the shire.

To reconstruct the world of episcopal Conformists in Cambridgeshire during this period like Thomas Lee, three areas must be addressed. First, an examination of the administrative structure set up by Parliament for the sequestration of its opponents' estates is needed. From that, a contextual survey for suppression in the local parish is provided, demonstrating what sequestration could facilitate in the community.⁷ Second, an analysis of the role of the University of Cambridge will be delineated. The University witnessed mass ejection of both clergy and scholars, subsequently becoming a bastion of the support for the national Church. Finally, with these two points considered, it reveals how repressed Church of England supporters preserved their religiosity in wider Cambridgeshire. Among the issues parsed are the transformation of the parish Church during the Interregnum, how adherents utilized the Book of Common Prayer, the role of ceremonialism in Church services, and the accounts of provocation at the hands of the commonwealth officials.

2.1 Contextualizing Cambridgeshire's Conformity

Yet, before expanding on the areas of analysis, one must first establish the parish in its own right. During the Interregnum, Parliament came to be dominated by Puritans who installed a "godly rule" on the English people, envisioning a society who acquiesced to the religious programs of the

⁷ Christopher O' Riordan, "Sequestration and Social Upheaval: Madeley, Shropshire, and the English Revolution," *West Midlands Studies*, xviii (1985), 21-31.

Civil War and Interregnum regimes. This compliance included the ejection of many Church of England divines from Churches throughout the nation, including in Cambridgeshire. Thus, Conformist attempts at preservation in Cambridgeshire were a microcosm of conservations occurring throughout the wider English landscape.

From September 1643 onwards, Parliament dictated the agenda for initiating ejections to Parliamentary committees in the counties. Between 1641 and 1660, some 2,780 clergy in England, around a third, were ejected from their livings or sequestered.⁸ The ostracization of this parish clergy in the 1640s are known to us chiefly through the work of two men's later accounts, John Walker, a High-Church Tory rector, and A.G. Matthews, a Congregational minister.

Exeter clergyman John Walker's biographical work on the Church of England priests during the English Civil War and Interregnum is a valuable source in gathering the names, and tracing the steps, of the ejected clergy. Much of what we know about the experiences of Church of England clergy during this period comes from documents in the John Walker archive. These are a rich historical source from people in society whose voices are rarely enshrined in the historical record. From 1704 onwards, Walker, persuaded by a neighboring clerical polemicist, Thomas Long, began compiling the work now commonly known as *The Sufferings of the Clergy*.⁹ In it he argued that Church of England clergy and their families were the true victims of the religious conflicts, their griefs during the Civil Wars far outnumbering and surpassing anything subsequently experienced by Dissenters. Walker conducted his research using printed and manuscript sources available to him. He also directly solicited information, via a circular sent to

⁸ Clive Holmes, *The Suffolk Committees for Scandalous Ministers 1644-1646* (Ipswich: The Suffolk Records Soc., 13, 1970), 9-4.

⁹ J. Walker, *An Attempt Towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England: Heads of Colleges, Fellows, Scholars, andc. who were Sequester'd, Harrass'd, andc. in the Late Times of the Grand Rebellion* (1714).

archdeacons to disseminate amongst parish clergy.¹⁰ After his death individual accounts were deposited, along with his other papers, as the J. Walker archive in the Bodleian Library.

Two centuries later, historian A. G. Matthews produced a revision of Walker's findings that was a model of scholarship and brevity. He qualified Walker's more exaggerated claims while also adding over a thousand names to the list of displaced clergy. Indeed, in 1948, Matthews published an expanded version of John Walker's early eighteenth-century collection, *Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion*. Titled *Walker Revised*, Matthews' volume found itself among the most valuable sources detailing the losses sustained by Church of England clergy in areas controlled by Parliament during the Civil War, and in all of the nation afterwards.¹¹

Historically a rich agrarian county, scholars have focused on the economic development of Cambridgeshire. In the sixteenth century, barley was grown in large quantities in the south, later to be made into malt, and the manufacture of willow baskets was simultaneously carried on in the fen-districts.¹² Peterborough, for example, was a prosperous market town during the late medieval period, dominated by the Abbey of St Peter. Not only was the abbey Church later called Peterborough Cathedral, an imposing physical presence over the parish, but the abbey served as the administrative civic center in the roles of local landlord, rent collector, tax collector, owner of many local pubs, custodian of the markets, and local constabulary.¹³ The town also had the distinct honor of the serving as the resting place for a Queen of England, with Catharine of Aragon's

¹⁰ G. B. Tatham, *John Walker and the Sufferings of the Clergy* (Cambridge: Cambridge Historical Essays, 1911).

¹¹ A.G. Matthews, *Walker Revised* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948); John Walker's collection is located at Bodl., MSS. J. Walker consists of papers on which he based his most pertinent works. papers include a large number of original communications from all parts of England, but especially Devonshire, as well as Walker's own notes and extracts. In addition to these volumes, the work of Ian Green has added to the numbers of ministers in each category. See Ian Green, "Career Prospects and Clerical Conformity in the Early Stuart Church." *Past & Present*, no. 90 (1981), 71-115; "The persecution of 'scandalous' and 'malignant' parish clergy during the English Civil War," *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 508, 522.

¹² Rev. Edward Conybeare, *A History of Cambridgeshire* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), 13.

¹³ Edmund King, "Large and Small Landowners in Medieval England: The Case of Peterborough Abbey," in *Landlords, Peasants, and Politics in Medieval England*, edited by T.H. Aston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 141.

remains being interred within the Abbey Church in January 1536. Nonetheless, such an honor, and industry, was not to ensure the Abbey's prosperity for long. Indeed, at the onset of the Civil Wars, the Royalist newsbook *Mercurius Aulicus* depicted the following scene of the town, stating,

It was advertised this day from Peterborough, that Colonel Cromwell had bestowed a visit on that little city, and put them to the charge of his entertainment, plundering a great part thereof to discharge the reckoning, and further that in pursuance of the Reformation, he did most miserably deface the Cathedral Church, destroy the Organs, and destroy the glass windows, committing many other outrages on the house of God which were not acted by the Goths in the sack of Rome, and are most commonly forborne by the Turks when they possessed themselves by force of a Christian city.¹⁴

The events described are a result of Peterborough's fierce loyalty for the late king. In neighboring Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex the great majority of the Puritan parish clergy supported the Parliamentary party during the Civil War, and, as a result, less than one quarter of the clergy in the three counties were sequestered for their Royalist sympathies. Cambridgeshire, by contrast, saw sixty percent of the clergy sequestered for their allegiance.¹⁵ Given that the town was only on the cusp of East Anglia, which leaned more towards the Royalist cause, this is little surprising. Bishop John Towers is an example of those prosecuted for their Royalist leanings, as he was one of the twelve bishops imprisoned in the Tower of London for protesting against the Bishop's Exclusion Bill of 1642. After his release the following year, he spent the duration of the Civil War at the Royalist capital at Oxford.¹⁶ Towers and his fellow clergymen fought for the King and battled with Parliament for their estates. Between 1653 and 1656, St. John's parish had embarked upon a building project: the influential mansion, Thorpe Hall. In 1654, John Evelyn visited the house during the building, and described it as "a stately palace built out of the ruins of the Bishop's palace and cloisters."¹⁷ Whilst the town now had a prominent Parliamentary structure, it was

¹⁴ *Mercurius Aulicus*, Friday 28 April 1643.

¹⁵ J. Walker, *An Attempt*, 172.

¹⁶ David Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2009), 189.

¹⁷ John Evelyn, "The Diary of John Evelyn," in *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 2 vols. ed. William Bray (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1902), 1:305.

determined to still proclaim its Royalist loyalties. The local elite families such as the Ormes and Fitzwilliams were Cavaliers in sympathy, as were also the local clergy of Conformist inclination.¹⁸

For the 1654 Parliament, Peterborough was the only place in England to send a Royalist Member of Parliament. Sir Humphrey Orme was to be the new incumbent of the Orme estates after the death of his namesake grandfather in 1648. This appointment reflected poorly on Orme, but it was only one of many denunciations made against his character. He was embodiment of Peterborough's Royalist and Preservationist settlement, known to consort with Cavaliers in London, and was allegedly a "profane swearer, hard drinker and a drinker of to the health of the late King."¹⁹ He drew great condemnation, so much so that a petition circulated on 19 August 1654 referred urging Whitehall to refer him to the Committee for Elections. In it, Orme was criticized by local Puritans for marrying the widow of Robert Aprice of Washingly, a well-known Papist, and that she stood "a convicted Recusant whose former husband was slain in the War of ye late King." Local inhabitants were also frustrated and aghast at Orme's lack of decency, stating "that in his drinking humor he twice quarreled with one Lawrence Robinson, both of them stabbing each other until they were near death." Summarizing their appeal, the petitioners suggested that he was unable to carry out his responsibilities, alleging "that when he was in the Commission of Peace, a complaint was made to him accusing that people that had cursed the Lord's day," In response, Orme, "discouraged the officers from acting and did not punish the offenders." Their objections little concerned the MP.²⁰

¹⁸ Wilbur Cortez Abbott, and Catherine D. Crane, eds. *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell: The Protectorate, 1655 – 1658* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 84.

¹⁹ W. H. Bernard Saunders, ed. *Fenland Notes and Queries, A Quarterly Antiquarian Journal for the Fenland, in the counties of Huntingdon, Cambridge, Lincoln, Northampton, Norfolk and Suffolk*, 7 vols. (Peterborough: G. C. Caster, 1889-1909), 3:99-100.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Petitions such as Orme's case must be viewed with healthy historical skepticism.²¹ After all, these petitions may, or may not, adequately reflect the majority sentiment in the parishes. Despite the inherent problems of using petitions to gauge the extent of discontent, however, these tracts do express the discontent felt by a vocal, if not necessarily substantial, minority. Thus, one can infer from the petition that Peterborough, despite its strong Royalist leanings, reflected the religious and political battles taking place on the national stage. Moreover, it remains clear that Cambridgeshire did not have a homogenous religious landscape. Where Peterborough embraced its civilians' loyalties to both Church and King, the eastern parish of Over were inhabited by those less assured of their fealty: Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, and the prophet Ludowick Muggleton, a frequent visitor to the area.²² Bristol, contrastingly, enjoyed three Independent Churches, Baptist congregations, a Presbyterian enclave, and a Quaker assembly.²³ In short, then, the connections between separatists and Conformist social and economic groupings remains elusive to trace.²⁴

²¹ John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1993), 289.

²² Lodowick Muggleton, along with his cousin John Reeve, was the founder of the Muggletonian sectary. The pair saw themselves as the last prophets and the Two Witnesses foretold in the Book of Revelation chapter 11 verse 3. As prophets, Muggleton and Reeve believed that their mysticism allowed them to both bless and curse, a crucial element in establishing their authority over enthusiastic followers. For more on the history of the Muggletonians, see William Lamont, *Last Witnesses: The Muggletonian history 1652-1979* (London: Ashgate, 2006).

²³ For their part, the Quakers were referred to as "of the lower and poor rank, most of them women and maids that get their living by making of lace. The men that frequent them are but a few and they likewise but of little esteem and name in the town." John Spurr, *The Post-Reformation: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 1603-1714* (London: Routledge, 2006), 322.

²⁴ Spurr, *The Post-Reformation*, 30. Evidence from Cambridgeshire indicates that dissent drew members from all social ranks, undermining earlier suggestions that the Quakers were a movement of the middling sort. Much of this evidence is drawn from various committees set up between 1642 and 1660 when the Church of England was profoundly transformed. The committees most pertinent to this chapter are the Commons Committee for Scandalous Ministers, Committee for Plundered Ministers, Committee for the Approbation of Public Preachers, Committee for Plundered Ministers and the House of Lords Journals, Committee for Advance of Money and the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents.

2.2 Supplanting Conformity: Ejections, Sequestration, and Property

The Church of England faced many problems relating to the ongoing ejections and sequestrations of the clerical staff. Ministers who had reluctantly conformed to the new order were unlikely to prove zealous reformers. Some had not only been ejected, but also described as scandalous or malignant individuals. The fall from grace for these men typically ended with finding another occupation, albeit with less social standing and fiscal recompense. For their part, Puritan ministers occasionally had to fight prolonged battles against their predecessors who refused to accept dismissal or surrender their income. Puritans might also face opposition from parishioners irritated at the suppression of Prayer Book services and traditional festivals. Anti-clericalism reached a level hitherto unknown, and tithes proved hard to collect. All these problems were further aggravated by growing tensions between the spiritual needs of the godly and those of the wider spiritual community.

Complicating the matters further, with the commencement of the Civil Wars, Parliament went to great measures to weaken the Church of England by implementing various programs. Categories of land, particularly owned by local churches, became subject to widespread popular expropriations under the new regime. Parliament viewed these estates as belonging to their enemies: Royalists Catholics, the Stuarts, and even the episcopacy of the Church of England itself. These adversaries of the godly were subjected to a variety of punitive measures, such as refusal to pay salaried dues, granting appropriation of material resources, and outright occupations of property without notice. Such confiscations resulted in a growing collection of names, dates, and addresses as Parliament expanded its Orwellian aspirations.²⁵

Simultaneously, the House of Commons actively sought in the 1640s to eradicate popery and institute the godly reformation. Beginning with the Parliamentary legislation of 1641–1643 on

²⁵ Barbara Donagan, "Atrocity, War Crime, and Treason in the English Civil War." *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 4 (1994), 1137-1140.

the destruction of images in the Church of England, carried out by some local Churchwardens and by Parliamentary designees.²⁶ It undertook a systematic attempt to rid the Church of scandalous and malignant ministers. In the same period, ejections of incompetent and indolent ministers, as well as Laudian appointees, reached a fever pitch. By 24 April 1643, a Committee for the Demolition of Monuments of Superstition and Idolatry commenced work in East Anglia. Images were not its only targets, as the iconoclasm to follow also sought to destroy stained glass, communion rails, furnishings, symbolic renditions of lions and lambs, organs, vestments and the Book of Common Prayer.²⁷

Three months later, in July 1643, Parliament desired to justify its purging of the previous religious establishment. The Westminster Assembly of divines was called, forming to make a final, scripturally justified, settlement of religion.²⁸ Yet, religious reform was also driven by political necessity. Namely, the need for an alliance with the Scots. The Solemn League and Covenant, an oath to support a Presbyterian government, was duly introduced by MPs on 25 September 1643. The oath required all males over the age of eighteen years to pledge their support to the godly cause. Refusal to take this oath, therefore defying Parliamentary policy, resulted to many Church sequestrations throughout the 1640s and 1650s. To administer the process of sequestration, a committee was set up in each county. Subsequently, if a local committee confiscated an estate

²⁶ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War 1642-1649*, 4 vols. (London: Longman's Green and Co., 1886), 1:153.

²⁷ *Journal of the House of Commons: Volume 4, 1644-1646*, 12 vols. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office 1802), 4:246.

²⁸ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 177.

under its purview, the property would then be rented to a tenant, the income of that rental used “to the best advantage of the State.”²⁹

However, it should be noted that sequestration was not confiscation, as the proprietor still retained the legal title to the estate. Although the House of Commons preferred wholesale confiscation of papist and delinquent estates to finance the war effort, the more conservative Lords opposed it. A compromise measure was fashioned in the shape of a “composition.” The landlord received his estate back in return for a hefty fine reckoned at a fraction of the estate’s value.³⁰ To assist in this fine collection and administer the overall process, the Committee for Compounding was established in London in 1643. The Committee ensured central receipt of composition revenues, unlike the proceeds of sequestrations which tended to stay in the counties. To enforce the new policies, for those who refused to pay the fines, confiscation beckoned. Bishops’ lands, in particular, were confiscated and put on sale by an ordinance in November 1646.³¹ After the King’s execution and abolition of the House of Lords in 1649, royal and cathedral lands also fell under the jurisdiction of the Committee.³²

Instances of Conformists refusing to pay rent and other dues, whether arbitrary or not, were widespread during the Civil War and Interregnum. Such cases illustrate an effect across all political categories of landlord.³³ Much of this exploitation can be attributed to the prevailing economic

²⁹ As part of the Parliamentary ordinance denouncing known “delinquents,” the following Conformists from Peterborough were listed: Captain Styles, Walton; Newdigate Pointz of Dogsthorpe; Dr. Cosin, Dean of Peterborough; William Hake, Peterborough; Matthew Robinson, Longthorpe; John Towers, Bishop of Peterborough; Thomas Dove, Upton; James Carrier, Helpston; John Bourne, Ufford; Mr Styldolph, Wittering; Robert Dixon, Peterborough; Millicent Pratt, Dogsthorpe. A more exhaustive list can be found in, W. H. Bernard Saunders, ed. *Fenland Notes and Queries, A Quarterly Antiquarian Journal for the Fenland, in the counties of Huntingdon, Cambridge, Lincoln, Northampton, Norfolk and Suffolk*, 7 vols. (Peterborough: G. C. Caster, 1889-1909).

³⁰ Jens Engberg, “Royalist finances during the English Civil War 1642–1646,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 14:2 (1966), 73-76.

³¹ *An Ordinance for the setting of the Lands of all the Bishops in the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales, for the Service of the Commonwealth, with the Instructions and Names of all the Contractors and Trustees, for the speedy execution of the same* (November, 1646).

³² Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 158-160.

³³ Samuel Rawson Gardiner estimated the reduction in rents in East Anglia as one-seventh in 1645, and in counties affected by the fighting it was proportionately much greater. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War 1642-1649*, iv, 5-6.

hardships and high taxation during this period. For these property owners, there was a clear expectation to share the burden of tax with their tenants by reducing rent. However, much was due to the exploitation of the “distracted times.”³⁴ Thus, Conformists found themselves not just displaced spiritually, but also financially. It is through these committee documents that Conformists can be traced to their relevant local parishes. For the more courageous episcopal Conformists, preservation of the Church also came in the form of public remonstrating. Often those who openly mocked opponents risked fines, imprisonment, or both. Should a Conformist be found protesting in such a matter, they were often summoned before county committees. The clergy was thus criticized for their aversion towards godly practices. In the local county court, accusations had their own set of Puritan laws.

2.3 Cambridge University: Matriculation and “Scandalous Sermons”

The English Civil War was an extremely mobile conflict, affecting much of the country, involving the active engagement of population, providing a distinctive intermingling of both civilians and combatants. Despite the conflict surrounding them, clergies’ families were expected to remain in their parishes. Their memories of these times vividly evoke how the civil conflict impacted the lives of many Conformists, many of whom were educated at the University of Cambridge. Cambridge was not simply adorned with majestic images representative of the Church of England for aesthetic value. It was also a training ground both for the clergy *and* the sons of the ruling class. Thus, great interest was taken by political and ecclesiastical authorities in its affairs. Unsurprisingly, then, changes at the University reflected, and sometimes anticipated, developments at national level. Put simply, Cambridge is essential in forming an understanding of

³⁴ Christopher O’ Riordan, “Popular Exploitation of Enemy Estates in the English Revolution,” *History* 78, no. 253 (1993), 187.

the Church of England's development. When Henry VIII needed a theologian to justify his rebellion against Pope Clement VII, he turned to the University and hired clergyman Edward Foxe. When Elizabeth I rebelled against Pope Pius V after the pontiff declared the Queen a heretic in his *Regnans in Excelsis*, she turned to Richard Hooker. And, when Charles I was executed, it was the Church of England's preservationists that championed conformity when confronted with adversary.

Cambridge had been largely unable to resist the forward march of Puritan reform. The university had undertaken a good deal of building work and refurbishment in the early decades of the seventeenth century, including the beautifying of college chapels. This was not simply a product of the new Laudian ideas. While the phenomenon gained its greatest momentum in the 1630s, under William Laud's chancellorship of Oxford, the trend towards a less austere approach to church decoration began earlier.³⁵ Laud, as president of St. John's College, introduced rich altar furnishings and a costly organ into the chapel and, in 1619, installed a picture of St. John the Baptist in the east window. In 1640, Laud was called to answer for the idolatry perceived as having infected the universities at his behest.³⁶ Indeed, such repression of Puritan practices, and his attempts to standardize parish church practice along the more ceremonial lines of the cathedral churches, increased tensions. Vice Chancellor John Cosin was accused of similar "errors" and of disbursing "great sums of money, vainly and for superstitious purposes."³⁷ The newly built chapel at Peterhouse was lavishly decorated by Matthew Wren, work beginning at the order of Cosin. The chapel was paved with polished marble and had a raised altar covered with bright silk, over which hung a dove representing the Holy Ghost with angels. Behind the altar were hangings depicting

³⁵ John G. Hoffman, "The Puritan Revolution and the 'Beauty of Holiness' at Cambridge: The Case of John Cosin," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 72 (1983), 97.

³⁶ Anthony Wood, *The History and Antiquities of the Colleges and Halls in the University of Oxford*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1786), 1:435.

³⁷ Hoffman, *The Puritan Revolution*, 94-105.

cherubim, and over the exterior of the chapel door was a statue of St. Peter in carved wood. All of this material culture speaks to the larger point of how churches in Cambridgeshire befell to Puritan attacks because of their beautification, a strong component of Puritan denounced ceremonialism.

The beautifying of the Cambridge chapels made it a ready target for Puritans. Such ceremonialism was closely linked with Conformist practices, envisioning the aesthetics as wanton idolatry. Thus, it became an underlying motive to rid the country of supposed overindulgences embedded deep within the Church of England. When the Grand Committee for Religion met on 28 November 1640, a sub-committee was appointed with the specific remit of investigating abuses and instances of ceremonialism at Magdalen College, Oxford as well as “other abuses in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.” This subcommittee, headed by Sir Robert Harley, was to consider, “the condition of both universities concerning matters of religion and what innovations and superstitions is crept in, and to enquire what new statutes and oaths are made in the said universities concerning religion.”³⁸

By 22 December, the subcommittee would also expand its investigation into claimed abuses in both the religious and the civil government of the universities. In short order, on 25 February 1641, a petition against the wicked courses of Richard Sterne, a noted Conformist and master of Jesus College Cambridge, was presented before the members. By March, seemingly motivated by the enquiry, impeachment proceedings were underway against Cosin. The course of events that would unfold over the decade suggest the extent to which Parliament believed the University was fertile grounds for the dissemination of Conformist thought. Cambridge, along with Oxford, was subjected to a second, thorough iconoclastic reform.³⁹ To that end, the University was purged of fellows which was both “swift and brutal,” which was contrasted with the “hesitant

³⁸ Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 183.

³⁹ Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), 99-132.

and dilatory” efforts pursued at Oxford.⁴⁰ A factor in this haste was the urgent need at Cambridge for the Earl of Manchester, Edward Montagu, Commander in Chief of the Association, to be finished in time for the start of the campaigning season. It also suggests that Parliament hurried in order to halt the matriculation of Conformists in the region as they regarded the institution a mechanism for preserving the vitality of the Church of England.⁴¹

Clearly, universities were not exempt from Puritanical iconoclasm and bureaucratic investigations witnessed similarly in local parishes. Oxford was under the control of Royalists during the early 1640s and escaped much of the early iconoclasm. By contrast, Cambridge was subject to an investigation in May and June 1641, which focused on Laudian innovations in the chapels and the promotion of Laud’s supporters to fellowships and masterships. The control of most Cambridge colleges by Conformists, except for Emmanuel and Sidney Sussex Colleges, irritated Puritans. The privileges and honors accorded to Cambridge teaching and research positions were given over to those who had followed Laud’s innovations and been refused, in Puritan eyes, to Godly men.⁴² The innovations in the chapels, according to the report, included changes in liturgy and ceremony, movement of communion tables, and the placement of images in college chapels.⁴³

The investigations of the universities also focused the doctrines of Laudian-appointed clergyman and the very integrity of those clergy, thus fomenting discontent amongst Conformists. The Fellows of the colleges were attacked for seemingly popish sermons or any espousing of hostility toward Puritanism originating from the pulpit. To the Godly, drunkenness on the sabbath

⁴⁰ Ibid., 219.

⁴¹ Holmes, *The Eastern Association*, 185.

⁴² Puritan artisan Nehemiah Wallington complained in the 1630s about the conditions at Cambridge. There was a rise in popish doctrines at the university and in most places. See Paul Seaver, *Wallington’s World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1985).

⁴³ David Hoyle, “A Commons Investigation of Arminianism and Popery in Cambridge on the Eve of the Civil War,” *Historical Journal*, 29, No. 2 (1986), 419-425.

was a particular anathema that troubled the shire, and a further means of undermining those they disagreed with on Sunday mornings. Indeed, they would cast the older idea of “hospitality,” which led to Sunday entertainments, as insolence of the highest order. For example, some inhabitants of Fen Ditton complained that feasts associated with visits of their rector, Samuel Collins, Provost of King’s College, left some “so drunk that in the afternoon they have come to church, and have spewed most shamefully.” Reflectively, these festivities only further alienated the radicalizing community further from those who sought to find commonality.⁴⁴

Yet, the reasons why the Eastern Association initiated such a major iconoclastic campaign remain unclear. Likely, such disruptive undertakings arose from simply the zeal of the individuals involved. Utilized by opponents of Conformity, it was a systematic effort to further dismantle the Church of England by invoking fear and disorder. For example, the attack on Cambridge’s colleges and chapels culminated in the arrival of the “bureaucratic Puritan,” William Dowsing, a particularly vociferous enemy of Conformity.⁴⁵ Dowsing was appointed by the Puritan Earl of Manchester to enforce Parliament’s ordinances in East Anglia. His attacks were the continuation of a century of systematic extermination, “an almost ritualistic destruction of symbols representative of the enemy... the Puritan theology-in-action of a Godly and reforming army.”⁴⁶ Thankfully, for historians, Dowsing kept a detailed journal of the parishes he visited. Those from his time in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk portray the reality in situ of the 1640s iconoclasms and the parochial response to them.⁴⁷ Wonderfully detailed, his iconoclastic journey noted sixteen Cambridge colleges, twelve parish churches in the city of Cambridge, eighty-four parish churches in the county of Cambridge, and one-hundred-and-forty-six parishes in Suffolk. Of particular

⁴⁴ Bodl., MSS J Walker, fol. C7.2.

⁴⁵ John Morrill, “William Dowsing, the Bureaucratic Puritan” in *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England*, eds. by John Morrill, Paul Slack, and Daniel Woolf (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 173-203.

⁴⁶ Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm*, 201.

⁴⁷ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 178.

interest to him was the targeting of the colleges of Cambridge. Described in vibrant detail, he recounts with some measure of satisfaction the destruction of the Marian images at Benet College on 23 December 1643.⁴⁸ Personally, he was so inspired that he actively took part in the destruction of the tomb of Richard Billingford, a medieval official of Cambridge whom Puritans found disdainful for its honoring to the Virgin Mary. The tomb's inscriptions, glorifying the Virgin Mary and commending Billingford's soul and body to her, were inciteful to the Puritanical sentiments. At Magdalen College, Dowsing would continue his own personal crusade, burning a picture of Jesus and the Virgin Mary, viewing the icons with clear Puritanical biases. Yet, no record exists of his visit to Kings' College chapel, the site of many Marian images, or to Peterhouse, the seat of John Cosin's renovations and decorations. Their own decorations, however, were destroyed but the assailants are unknown.⁴⁹

In addition to embodying a crucible for religious idols and subsequent iconoclasms, the University was also an arena in which alleged scandalous sermons were expounded and the dangerous ideas espoused to its pupils. The Parliamentary report on "innovations and abuses" at Cambridge by agents of the University committee elucidates an understanding of the frustrations and anxieties derived from Church practices.⁵⁰ Contested sermon topics included discussions of

⁴⁸ There exists a rich array of scholarly work on Dowsing, including: Margaret Aston, "Puritans and Iconoclasm, 1560–1660," in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700*, edited by Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (London: Palgrave, 1996); Patrick Collinson, "From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: The Cultural Impact of the Second English Reformation," reprinted in *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640*, ed. by Peter Marshall (London, 1997), 278–308. The work of Trevor Cooper and others in the new edition of Dowsing's journal employs evidence from surviving Churchwardens' accounts. They portray the visitation to counties that do not appear in his diaries. See Trevor Cooper, ed. *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia during the English Civil War* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001).

⁴⁹ Edward Montagu, The Earl of Manchester and the Commander in Chief of the Association, was another individual determined to rectify the religious settlement in a manner against Conformists. Closely involved in oversight of reformist agendas, he personally felt driven to pursue the supplanting of Conformists ministers in the area, specifically by removing Conformist lecturers en masse from Cambridge University. Moreover, he spoke often in the House of Lords in support of the Commons' orders against images in 1641. Thus, without Manchester's keen support, it is unlikely that Dowsing, or others, would have wielded such power. Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War*, 231–325

⁵⁰ William Cobbett, *The Parliamentary history of England from the earliest period to the year 1803: from which last-mentioned epoch it is continued downwards in the work entitled "Hansard's Parliamentary debates,"* 36 vols. (London: T.C. Hansard, 1806), 791.

free will, justification through works and private confession, as well as any promotion of the importance of ceremony that emphasized the singular holiness of churches and their altars. For example, Peter Hausted of Queens College fell afoul of the new regime when defending the practice of bowing to the altar and the legality of maintaining pictures in churches.⁵¹ Of particular interest in the report, however, is the sheer volume of pages detailing complaints against named individuals for their use of ceremony and other offensive practices, such as openly harassing Godly fellows.⁵²

Considering the restrictions brought about by such investigations undertaken at the time, it is surprising that the University of Cambridge still matriculated an impressive array of clergy during these years. In many cases, children of zealous Puritans entered Cambridge in search of simply an education which would shape their both their theology and understanding of ongoing politico-religious controversies. Some students' time at the institution, however, was much more complex. For example, Oliver Heywood, a Royalist as well as a Presbyterian, entered the University in November 1647. Born to the zealous Puritans Richard Heywood and Alice Critchlaw at Little Lever, Lancashire, he was baptized at the notoriously radical Bolton Parish Church.⁵³ Such were the convictions of his family, that his parents took the unusual step of removing any sign of the cross at their son's baptism. Once at Trinity College, Cambridge, he studied under the guidance of eventual Quaker, Alexander Akehurst.⁵⁴ As he sought to also better define his inner

⁵¹ BL, Add 15,672, fol. 16.

⁵² David Hoyle, "A Commons Investigation of Arminianism and Popery in Cambridge on the Eve of the Civil War," *The Historical Journal* 29, no. 2 (1986), 420.

⁵³ The bulk of published scholarship concerning Oliver Heywood covers his life post-Restoration. For more on these events, see J. Smail, "Local politics in Restoration England: religion, culture, and politics in Oliver Heywood's Halifax," in *Protestant identities: religion, society and self-fashioning in post-Reformation England*, edited by M. McClendon, J. R. Ward, and M. MacDonald (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999), 234-48; W. J. Shiels, "Oliver Heywood and his Congregation," in *Voluntary religion: papers read at the 1985 Summer Meeting and the 1986 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* edited by W. J. Shiels and D. Wood; "Provincial Preaching on the Eve of the Civil War: Some West Riding Fast Sermons" in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain*, edited by A. Fletcher and P. Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁵⁴ Shiels, *Oliver Heywood*, 262.

spiritual life alongside his study of theology, Heywood sought out the preaching of Conformist clergyman and ejected minister, Samuel Hammond at St Giles's Church, Cambridge.⁵⁵ Hammond's role in sculpting the youth's worldview would ultimately have a profound effect on the already reverent Puritan.

By 1650, trained by radicals and reformists throughout his years in the college, Heywood graduated. Shortly thereafter, he began a personal journey in reconsidering not only his membership in the Church of England, but also the very manner in which he thought the Church should be conducting itself. Opting to join the new republican government, which allowed a far broader and more tolerant Church, he quickly grew disillusioned by the efforts to replace traditional hierarchical and disciplinary structures that had disappeared once the abolition of the episcopacy and Church courts had been finished. Nonetheless, his close social network of Conformists, united by their quest of religious expression, undoubtedly aided his attempts to preserve his Church. In that pursuit, Nathaniel Heywood, Oliver's brother, was among those whom he kept close to and with whom he also shared a house. Nathaniel, for his part, had been appointed to the chapelry of Illingworth.⁵⁶ He also remained close to his old Cambridge friend, Eli Bentley, who became assistant minister at Halifax in 1653, also joining the brothers in their attempts at reform. Later that decade, Heywood became an open Royalist, subsequently arrested and threatened with deprivation for refusing to give public thanksgiving at the suppression of the insurrection led by George Booth in 1659. When he heard of George Monck's, the First Duke of Albemarle, declaration for the Stuart regime, Heywood recorded the news in his diary with a psalm of praise. Though, unknown to him at the time, the Restoration would soon bring his official

⁵⁵ R. Slate and W. Vint, eds. *The whole works of the Rev. Oliver Heywood ... with memoirs of his life*, 5 vols. (London: John Vint, 1825-7).

⁵⁶ J. Horsfall Turner, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702 his autobiography, diaries, anecdote and event books; illustrating the general and family history of Yorkshire and Lancashire* (Brighouse: A.B. Bayes, 1882), 178.

ministry to an end.⁵⁷ Falling into conflict with Richard Hooke, the new Puritan vicar of Halifax, over the rights of baptism in the outlying chapelries, Heywood went too far in his efforts to be excused. Summing his time as a minister best, Heywood recalled the legacy he believed he had imparted. Simply arguing,

That I should be a public preacher for over forty-four years, and I have such measure of health, liberty, opportunity, more than most of my brethren, some good successes and fruit of my poor labor be clearly shown. I have printed so many books, brought up two sons to be ministers, built a chapel, helped so many ministers and Christians in their necessities by myself and others, and yet have a competency myself and wife to live upon. Nothing more improbable then these things and many more experiments I might produce, which I record not for ostentation but to set off the riches of grace.⁵⁸

Whether he achieved the riches he sought, after his death in 1702, is admittedly unknown. However, Heywood, and those like him, demonstrate the convictions many had toward conformity in spite of Puritanical efforts.

2.4 “A Priest to the Temple:” A Preservation Handbook

Clearly, the political and cultural labyrinth Conformists in Cambridgeshire found themselves was by no means an easy task to navigate. As the Civil Wars era proceeded, so too did the increased pressures of subjection through greater limits on religious expression. Nevertheless, Conformists continued to rebel against governmental committees and ordinances against their faith in an attempt to preserve their Church. Yet, the lectures promoted at Cambridge University were not the only source of strength embraced by Conformists. Conformist-inspired guidebooks were also utilized alongside the theological justification of faith provided by Richard Hooker almost a century beforehand.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 297.

Complimenting the works of Hooker, the writings of Conformist George Herbert also shed lights on how Conformists circumnavigated policies of suppression throughout the Interregnum.⁵⁹ Born on 3 April 1593 in Montgomery, Wales, he would describe his parturition as being “extracted out of a Generous, Noble, and Ancient Family”⁶⁰ Herbert’s father, Richard Herbert, was at various times an MP, a JP, sheriff, and deputy lieutenant for the county of Montgomery. George’s older brother, Edward, became a philosopher and diplomat, and known for his poetry. For his achievements, the Crown would also make Edward the first Baron Herbert of Cherbury. George matriculated from Cambridge University, where he graduated with a BA in 1613 and MA in 1617. Following his graduation, Herbert continued to work at Cambridge. In 1617, he was employed as *sublector quartae classis* at Trinity College, after which he became a *praelector* in rhetoric in 1618, eventually promoted to university orator in 1620. During his tenure at Cambridge, Herbert became a staunch defender of the Church of England.

For example, in 1620, when a Scottish theologian and reformer, Andrew Melville, published *Anti-tami-cami-categoria*, Herbert found his choler overflowing, inciting him to the point of declaiming the entire reform movement.⁶¹ Melville’s poem was an attack on the Church of England, in which the ceremonies of the Church were derisively ridiculed. Moved to action, Herbert penned the *Musae responsoriae*, an unpublished set of Latin epigrams vitriolically mocking Puritan extremism. The rebuttal, however, remained unpublished until 1662, when it appeared in *Ecclesiastes Solomonis* by James Duport, fellow and vice-master of Trinity College, Cambridge.⁶² Such a venomous attack on the national Church alarmed Herbert. Indeed, observing the increasingly hostile climate such a publication fostered, Herbert would write shortly before his

⁵⁹ Philip Sheldrake, “George Herbert and The Country Parson” in *A History of Pastoral Care* edited by G. R. Evans (London: Cassell, 2000), 3-4.

⁶⁰ *George Herbert's Remains*, sig. b6r.

⁶¹ Bodl., MS. Tanner 307.

⁶² Cristina Malcolmson, *Heart-work: George Herbert and the Protestant Ethic*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 2.

death in 1633, *A Priest to the Temple*, otherwise known as *The Country Parson his Character and Rule of Holy Life*.⁶³

At the highpoint of the Interregnum, *The Country Parson* was posthumously published in 1652. If Herbert had survived past the Civil Wars, he likely would have become an ardent defender of now disestablished Church. Nevertheless, *The Country Parson* substitutes as a handbook for those wishing to defend the Church in the anxious politico-religious climate fostered in by the Cromwellian Commonwealth. In his piece, Herbert argues what he envisions as the fundamental principles of faith, human relationships, and religious rhetoric that would inspire his poems.⁶⁴ To him, the model Churchman particularly emphasized the clergyman's own humility, charity, patience, and "grave liveliness" in prayer. Yet, he also was careful to maintain proper restraint in times that may warrant dire actions.

The Parson exceeds not an hour in preaching, because all ages have thought that a competency, and he that profits not in that time, will less afterwards, the same affection which made him not profit before, making him then weary, and so he grows from not relishing, to loathing.⁶⁵

Hence, a successful parson advises his fellow clergy to not engage in outward violence, but to turn inward to inner peace found in the sacraments. Channeling the works of Hooker, then, Herbert also comments on the appropriate liturgical *via media* of the Church, stating "And all this he does, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition, and slovenliness." Beyond describing the personal virtues of an ideal cleric, Herbert would also explore his conceptualization of a successful community. Regardless of

⁶³ George Herbert, *The Country Parson* (London: 1652).

⁶⁴ For a biographical sketch of Herbert's life, see I. Walton, *The life of Mr George Herbert* (London, 1670); Amy Marie Charles, *A Life of George Herbert* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 28–33.

⁶⁵ Herbert, *The Country Parson*, Chapter VII.

education or class, a community that is well-ordered and well-headed by the Church would always triumph in both its faith and perseverance of beliefs.⁶⁶

Herbert's guide for the displaced ministers was as influential to Conformists ministers as was Hooker's teachings and Laud's sermon to parishioners. He defined his magnum opus not as an elegant Cambridge-style collection of volumes but a guide "to a holy Life." One in which those lost could cling to in their hour of need.⁶⁷ This, for Conformists, was a guide for the clergymen amidst the Interregnum. He saw the function of a priest in a community in practical terms: primarily spiritual through teaching, preaching, charity, and the celebration of the sacraments. In times of immense persecution and division, the clergyman was the leader who bound the community together. According to his elder brother Edward, George made such an impression with his "holy and exemplary" life at Bemerton that he was "little less than Sainted" in the area around Salisbury.⁶⁸ Indeed, like Hooker, many would turn to his prose for guidance throughout the ensuing political and religious turmoil in Interregnum England.

One such instance of his influence can be traced to an anonymous elderly Cambridgeshire minister, arrested in 1653 for using common prayer and employing Herbert's teachings. He humbly argued that, as he had been beneficed "almost 40 years before" there was a Directory, to serve God in the way he had been "used to for all my life." He also declared that the local parish was without a rector, "to give the many sacraments" and thus refused to obey ordinances enacted by Parliament.⁶⁹ In defense of his actions, the minister cited his faith in the national Church, of his confidence in Laudian prayer, and lamented at the grievances he suffered under Parliament.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid, Chapter XIII.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Chapter XXXIII.

⁶⁸ Constantinos Apostolos Patrides, *George Herbert: the critical heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1995), 299.

⁶⁹ Bodl., Rawl. D 1350, fol. 79.

⁷⁰ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker fol. C3.237.

2.5 Assaults on the Parish Church: Cleansing, Transformation, and Resistance

The parish Church in seventeenth-century England was both a space of ritual and an arena in which the battle of the episcopate was fought.⁷¹ Both the most modest parish churches and the most splendid cathedral provided public spaces in which audiences attended scripted performances. Yet, it was the parochial church that both acted as a vehicle for religious reform, and for educating the faithful in the principal tenets of belief.⁷² Although attitudes towards the parish and its church did vary amongst the confessions, these buildings remained at the heart of the local community. The Civil War era was a period in which the relationship between the Church and one's confessional identity was tested and remolded, sometimes leading to the creation of alternative sites of worship within the parish. This was undoubtedly true where Englishmen and women now worshipped in gathered congregations of Independents, Baptist, and Quakers. The Interregnum parish church reflected a contrasting character for the repressed Church clergy. The increasing policing nature of Cromwell's commonwealth meant that toleration was not officially extended to Roman Catholics or the Church of England. Yes, in practice if they exercised with discretion they too were ordinarily able to worship without harassment. This was rare.

In addition to these two roles, the Church also resembled a place for complaint and critique during the Interregnum. What was different in the 1650s was the degree of scrutiny of clerical behavior. Before his ejection, Cambridgeshire rector John Morden had preached on the need for compassion, "he that was a sinful man but weren't all men, for all men living are sinners, therefore if we live without scandalous sins, we live well enough."⁷³ However, during the Civil War and Interregnum period, hardline ideas shaped by Calvinism gained executive power. There was a

⁷¹ Carl B. Estabrook, "Ritual, Space, and Authority in Seventeenth-Century English Cathedral Cities," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32, no. 4 (2002), 597.

⁷² Ronald Hutton, *The Restoration: A Political and Religious History of England and Wales 1658-1667* (Oxford, 1985), 163.

⁷³ BL, Add. 15672, fol. 44.

heightened desire to search out and remove those failing to meet exacting standards of clerical behavior. Cambridgeshire, in particular, was a region in which such complaints were not just aired but also acted upon.⁷⁴

One inadvertent consequence resulting from the increased monitoring of small parish Churches and the relevant services in the procession was the dismantling of traditional ritualist spaces. The use of sacred space for the personal was always a quarrelsome issue.⁷⁵ The separation between clergy and laity was not necessarily endorsed by the all. The laity believed that Church services based around the new railed high altars increased their separation from the minister. Parishioners complained that they could no longer hear or see ministers, and some protested the self-important way ministers held themselves majestically apart in the chancel for part of the service. Parishioner Nicholas Mott, for example, was overheard joking that rector Richard Langham, standing in the chancel, looked at those entering the church, “as a lion upon dogs and bears.”⁷⁶ Further, civic leaders who led corporate processions in cathedrals competed with the high clergy’s influence and visibility on the expansive, grand, and consecrated stage. As a result, control over the setting where the liturgy was performed, over liturgical practice, and even over notions of sanctity were dramatic points of dispute related to contested space during the Interregnum. The Interregnum unraveled these issues. Where once matters over seated space were the priority, by 1652 the problem of having a physical space for the act of even congregating to worship took precedence over more trivial worries.

To further purify the parish church of its Catholic practices, Puritans sought to cleanse parish churches of both their Laudian ways and Catholic influences. One such account conveys parishioners of Soham behaving in a manner that was anything but Godly, and turned the service

⁷⁴ John Walter, “Gesturing at Authority: Deciphering the Gestural Code of Early Modern England,” *Past and Present*, 203, No. 4 (2009), 101-8.

⁷⁵ Bodl., MS J. Walker, fol. C2.3.

⁷⁶ Bodl., MS J. Walker, fol. C2.365.

into a travesty by “talking, joking, and sleeping.” In Bishop Matthew Wren’s Ely, precisely defined complaints were raised concerning specific liturgical practices, such as denying the sacrament to those not kneeling at the altar. Ceremonialism was another particular concern as several Cambridgeshire ministers were enthusiastic ceremonialists. Henry Downhall, a clergyman in Tofts, was described as ceremonious, “and showed it in all the bowing, and cringing, and altering their places in reading of services.” Likewise, William Izaakson was described as “most zealous” to put in “Bishop Wrens fancies.”⁷⁷ Others, however, were countering to external pressures. Roger Hechstetter at Soham refused to give the sacrament away from rails, declaring “he does not nor would not for the great of losing his living.”⁷⁸

Conformist opponents believed that the ceremonial of public worship in the parish churches was reversing the habits to which old men and women were accustomed, in a direction which was especially repugnant to many, and “put upon the churches the shape and face of popery.”⁷⁹ These issues, in an age when any move in the direction of popery roused bitter memories, made the coming struggle turn mainly upon religious convictions. When Charles sought to impose his religious system upon Scotland, and to march against the Scottish Covenanters, he was regarded as fighting against the Gospel and in favor of the Pope. Such cross-confessional allegiances magnified tensions within the country, tricking down to local parishes.

The fear of Laudianism, often associated with Roman Catholicism by opponents, ran deep in the shire. Several Laudian ministers in Matthew Wren’s diocese of Ely resisted parishioners who sought implementation of the administrative orders against idolatry and superstition. William Ling of Girton, for example, refused to read the instruction for relocating Communion tables and taking up rails. When the Churchwardens took independent action, Ling moved the table back

⁷⁷ BL, Add. 15,672, fol. 27.

⁷⁸ Ibid., fols 21, 32.

⁷⁹ Alfred Kingston, *Hertfordshire during the Great Civil War and Long Parliament* (London: E. Stock, 1894), 5.

again and obstructed the workmen engaged in leveling the chancel floor.⁸⁰ Cheyney Row, local minister, similarly threatened and hassled the Churchwardens who attempted to move the Communion table and remove the rails.⁸¹ John Hill of Coveney in the Isle of Ely dissuaded parishioners from taking down the rails, stating “there would come time when they might need of them again.”⁸² Hill was steadfast in his prophecy that one day, Conformists would see their church restored and “their rails” reinstated in the church.⁸³

With the increasingly tight restriction on public prayer, adherents of the Church of England nonetheless continued to celebrate the sacraments notwithstanding the above attempts to dismantle the parish church. For example, the rector of Market Deeping, Paul Prestland, who took the Royalist side later during the Civil Wars, was also ejected from his living after pressure from local people. Unsurprisingly, he was further denied one-fifth of his former salary to which he was entitled.⁸⁴ Hence, Prestland was forced to sell the family silver to support his wife and children following his ejection. Not only did the rector find himself in despair, but his family shared in the suffering of their patriarch. Following his ejection, he resided for five months in a barn with his wife and five children:

In the Barn they lived near half a year. But then the harvest coming on the Intruder must have that at liberty to lay his corn. Now the Church is their last refuge ... The Belfry was not preferred as to the open air.⁸⁵

Outbuildings, or the traditional sanctuary of the Church itself, often provided refuge in place of private housing. However, with the mounting fear of being caught in a place of worship, episcopal Conformists who sought shelter in barns did so for the sake of shelter and prayer. Just

⁸⁰ BL, Add. MS. 15,672, ff. 29, 33.

⁸¹ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fols. C 7.

⁸² BL, Add. Ms. 15,672, fols. 33. 77.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Bodl., MS J. Walker, fol. C2.365.

⁸⁵ Bodl., MS J. Walker, fol. C2.365; Bodl., MS J. Walker, fol. C3.74.

as the Reformation fashioned the very being of Church and worship in the Tudor era, the role of parish Church would also change during the Commonwealth. It continued to represent the spiritual and social center of the laity, but one in which adherents to the faith knew of the repercussions for partaking in services. Nevertheless, they continued to pray on Sundays and feast days, and to mark there the most important events of their lives. Where the parish Church stood as the place where Conformists displayed their social differences and resolved their communal tensions, they now united in solitude to avoid the scrutinizing of opponents.

2.6 Conclusion

As this chapter has examined, the shape of the Church of England in Cambridgeshire during the Interregnum was heavily influenced by legislative ordinances which enforced new religious policies against episcopacy, ceremonialism, and idolatry. The 1645 Act was the catalyst of this transformation, forcing Conformists underground for the next fifteen years to both avoid persecution and partake in services. Many Parliamentary actions aided the Act. The administrative structure established by Westminster for the sequestration of its opponents' estates weakened the Conformist community by displacing members and financially draining them. The University of Cambridge saw the mass ejection of both clergy and scholars, which resulted in the subjugation of religious expression and expounding of intolerant attitudes. The amalgamating consequences of these new policies saw Conformists often fined, occasionally imprisoned, but always repressed. Just as Protestant reform was forced upon England in the sixteenth century by a small number of intolerant reformers, Puritan reform can be traced to the action of several Puritan reformers like Andrew Melville. The success to which the Puritan's suppressed the Church of England can also be credited to iconoclasm, specifically the destruction of altar rails, Prayer Books, and Church pews. However, as episodes of intolerance endured and attacks persisted, Conformists refused to abandon their Church by resisting attempts at reform. While the bloody battles of the Interregnum

were fought with swords nationwide between Parliamentarians and Royalists, Conformists in local parishes equipped with the Prayer Book resisted by engaging in sermons, administering rites, and disseminating teachings of their Church.

CHAPTER 3. NORFOLK

In September 1643, Bishop of Norwich Joseph Hall wrote of his grievances against a Parliamentary mob that had caused considerable damage to Norwich Cathedral and the nearby parish. He recalled,

A plundering commission, relying on the support of their soldiers, defaced monuments, broke windows, filed bells, dashed in pieces carved works, and reared the brasses off the stones, the Cathedral affording them above a hundred; thereby defacing the memory of the ancestors of many of the most ancient and worshipful families in the county pulling down the pulpit in the Green-yard. What clattering of glasses, what a beating down of walls... what demolishing of curious stonework, what pilfering of the destroyed organ pipes. Both copes and surplices, together with the leaden cross which had been newly sawn down from over the Green yard pulpit, and the singing books and service books were carried to the fire in the public market-place. A lewd wretch walking before the train in his cope trailing in the dirt, with a service book in his hand, imitating in an impious scorn the tune, and usurping the words of the Litany. The Cathedral was filled with musketeers, drinking and smoking as freely as if it had turned into an alehouse. Superstitious pictures were also burned in the marketplace, and the seals of the court fixed where the altar stood.¹

The desecration of the parish and wreckage of the cathedral capped a turbulent few years for Hall and his family.² Two years earlier, on 1 May 1641, Hall drew the ire of Parliament when he protested boldly in the House of Lords against the Root and Branch Bill. On 31 July 1641, the drawing up articles of impeachment against thirteen bishops, of whom Hall was one, further alienated the established ministry from the government. Parliamentary investigators paid a visit to

¹ Joseph Hall, *Bishop Hall's Hard Measure, written by himself upon his Impeachment of High Crimes and Misdemeanours, for Defending the Church of England* (1647), 16. Before his move to Norwich, Hall enjoyed the latter years of his stay at the diocese of Exeter where he held a living at St. Breock and the vicarage of Menheniot, Cornwall, in commendam. Bodl., MSS. 141, f. 105.

² I would like to thank Newton Key for his advice on this chapter, particularly locating sources of discontent in Norfolk via the works of John Evelyn.

Hall, reprimanding him over the issue of his continuing to ordain despite orders to cease.³ Later they returned with “many zealous followers” to reform the bishop’s chapel, where they found the windows “full of images, which were very offensive, and must be demolished pictures of some ancient and worthy Bishops, but there were also so many Popes.” Hall was incensed that the figures were defaced. Although, at the time, he did manage to persuade the reformers to allow him to have the work undertaken carefully “with the least loss and defacing of the windows.” Specifically, he ordered the heads removed from the figures of several bishops, justifying the limitations on the premise that “the bodies could not offend.”⁴ Shortly thereafter, the targeted bishops themselves were imprisoned in the Tower of London beginning on the New Year until Whitsuntide. Once bailed, Hall started his new diocese at Norwich, where he would meet with further persecution for his contrarian religious beliefs. For example, the Bishop was met with furor over his preaching when he decided “to preach to a numerous and attentive people, who were not sparing of my devout pains in this kind ever since. They grew every day more impatient of a bishop, threatened my silencing.”⁵ Exasperated at end of a long and difficult career, he later retired to the hamlet of Heigham, a suburb of Norwich, and spent his last thirteen years preaching and writing until he was not only “forbidden by man” but “at last disabled by God.”⁶ All of Hall’s descriptions of this period are unique. They offer a rare example of an eyewitness account of the violent iconoclasm perpetrated by civil authorities against Conformists. Such authorities promulgated this cracking down on venerated images. True, soldiers were involved in carrying out the work, but Hall

³ A discussion of the vitality of Puritanism throughout Norfolk is surveyed in K. W. Shipps, *Lay patronage of East Anglian Puritan clerics in Pre-Revolutionary England* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Yale, 1971), 304-315.

⁴ Hall, *Bishop Hall’s Hard Measure*, 13-15.

⁵ Philip Wynter, ed. *The works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall*, 10 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1863), 1:63.

⁶ Rev. John Jones, *Bishop Hall, his life and times, or: Memoirs of the life* (London, 1826), 4.

continually notes that “authority and presence” of the sheriff Thomas Tofts and council members Matthew Linsey and John Greenwood lead the movement against the articles found in churches.⁷

Indeed, Greenwood, Linsey, and Tofts are representative of the Godly Norwich community and the councils that oversaw the peoples of rural England. Despite holding an active element of Royalist support, the county supported Parliament during the Civil War.⁸ Between the two extremes of Puritan or Papist, a succession of Bishops of Norwich had endeavored to control their large and difficult diocese. Instructions on a wide range of matters, both secular and ecclesiastical, came down from both the Privy Council and the Archbishops, all to be carried out with varying efficiency once in situ. Bishops Edmund Freake, Edmund Scambler, Richard Redman, and John Jegon, all suffered in reputation from aggrieved or hostile witnesses.⁹ None of these bishops were men of great ability. None possessed the leadership style which might have won them a substantial measure of love and obedience from their clergy and people. With all their burdens, however, they managed to hold together the organization of the Church within their diocese, and gradually but perceptibly to raise the standard of learning and conduct among their clergy.

The path of a bishop was not an easy one, especially in an impoverished see such as Norwich. Some degree of episcopal state had to be observed. Hospitality was expected, a married man was obliged to make a provision for his family, and they were bound to resolve unseemly wrangles about leases and disrepair. The case of Bishop Joseph Hall foreshadowed the events which would encapsulate the diocese of Norwich as Parliament gained greater control of the

⁷ Hall, *Bishop Hall's Hard Measure*, 15. This is of interest as popular narrative promoted by Ian Gentles, which demonstrates how soldiers acted independently of oversight or orders. For more see Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army: In England, Ireland and Scotland, 1645-1653* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

⁸ Matthew Reynolds, *Godly Reformers and their Opponents in Early Modern England: Religion in Norwich, c.1560-1643* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁹ Ian Atherton, *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City, and Diocese, 1096-1996* (London: Hambledon Press, 1996) is a valuable survey which examines aspects of Norwich Cathedral's history.

county. Hall's remonstrance was but a single example of the aggressiveness faced those who wished to adhere to the Church of England.¹⁰

This chapter focuses on the elements of change and the state of permanence in Norfolk's political and religious arena after the factionalism and conflict beginning in 1649. It analyzes how Conformists in the Norfolk area continued to celebrate the most important of sacraments, those involving baptism and death, in order to preserve their vision of the Church amidst the ensuing disruption. Throughout the period, Norfolk experienced population growth, a growing dependence on the textile industry, and increasing interaction between urban and rural centers. The shire was also home to Norwich, which along with other leading provincial towns such as Bristol, Exeter, and York, experienced significant growth in spite of societal upheaval.¹¹ Thus, the city is solidified in a position as the social and economic hub of the county as well as the political and religious center of Norfolk.¹² Significant as these developments were, however, the religious community continued to fracture as instances of revolts and intolerance increased in severity and prevalence. By secretly partaking in baptism and burying their dead in accordance to the Book of Common Prayer, Conformists endeavored to ensure their community was spiritually gratified.

3.1 Contextualizing Norfolk's Conformity

Norfolk was a dynamic county undergoing a significant transformation in the seventeenth-century. Much of this change emanates from the events fostered during the Reformation, the community imbued with rich religious traditions. Indeed, the ideas of the Reformation had met with a prompt and enthusiastic reception in East Anglia, spreading rapidly amongst all classes.¹³

¹⁰ Jones, *Bishop Hall, his life and times*, 9-13.

¹¹ John F. Pound, *Government and Society in Tudor and Stuart Norwich, 1525-1675* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leicester, 1975), 16-23.

¹² Peter Clark and Paul Slack, eds. *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 1972), 5-6.

¹³ John Craig, *Reformation, Politics, and Polemics: The Growth of Protestantism in East Anglian Market Towns, 1500-1610* (London: Routledge, 2017), 8-9.

During the Marian reaction, more men and women died in flames for their faith than in any other locale save London and Canterbury. After, during Elizabeth's reign, Protestant sentiment was strengthened further by the refugees arriving from the Low Countries, with their horrifying stories of torture and persecution meeting with sympathy in a county that had an equal share of martyrdoms. Thus, the climate of opinion was favorable to the development of sectarians, including Anabaptists, Brownists, and the Family of Love, or Quakers. In general, the Puritan movement gathered in strength throughout Norfolk during the next century. Though, its development was not spectacular as may be at first assumed. The ministers of the varying flocks formed a cohesive body, determined to advance their cause by every means in their power.

The churches of Norfolk bore many traces of the effects wrought by the Reformation.¹⁴ The vestments had gone. The copes and chasubles of damask and silk and sarcenet long sold off, alongside the richly embroidered altar-cloths. The altar-plate had gone, its accompanying gold and silver chalices, as well as the patens with their Catholic emblems, had been replaced in every parish by a simple cup and cover. With the rise of eager commissioners of the Commonwealth, almost everything metal was impounded, whether precious or not. Crosses, lamps, and candlesticks. Even the sanctus bells disappeared, as too most of the greater bells in the steeple towers. The illuminated service-books, missals, psalters, and graduals vanished.¹⁵ Nonetheless, much remained that still affronted Puritan eyes as they gained fervor during the Interregnum. Images of the saints and angels decorated the ceilings, just as crucifixes and crosses decked the alter railings. Moreover, the inscriptions offered with prayers for the souls of the dead, illuminated by the light coming in through the sheer wealth of painted glass, offended reformists. These relics, then, and those

¹⁴ Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 22-23.

¹⁵ H. B. Walters, *Inventories of Norfolk Church Goods* (London, 1552), xxvi, 245-70.

Conformists who sought to maintain them, were envisioned as Catholic sympathizers, worthy of equal stigmatization.¹⁶

Great Yarmouth, the seaport for Norwich, and the base of much coastwise and seagoing traffic for all of England, serving as the headquarters of a vast fishing trade, was not left spared by iconoclasms or religious factionalism. Equally, King's Lynn, another regional port, but smaller, less self-contained, also drew the ire of Puritans. Both were governed by a group of leading merchants, but King's Lynn was more susceptible to the influence of the neighboring gentry due to its smaller size and influence. The advent of a major battle fought between Royalists and Parliamentarians in October 1643 further demonstrated to the residents that they lived at the sufferance of those in ascendancy elsewhere in Albion.¹⁷ The county initially sided with Parliament, however this would soon change. Seeking to stabilize its place in a post-war England, a controversial change in government changed the town's declared political allegiance to the side of Royalists. In response, Parliament sent an army to crush the potential of a Royalist uprising.¹⁸ Norwich, Yarmouth, and Lynn were borough towns, each returning two members to Parliament. So was Thetford, at the south-west extremity of the county. It was now small and decayed, retaining a vestige of its importance in earlier centuries scarcely; but it was still the only assize town besides Norwich, and remained so, to the general inconvenience, for two centuries to come.

Scattered over the countryside were some thirty market-towns and more than six hundred villages. Many of these market-towns, such as Aylsham, Swaffham, East Dereham, Fakenham, North Walsham, and Wymondham, was the metropolis of its neighborhood, and many people never went farther afield throughout their lives. Thus, these localities consisted of small pockets of tight-knit Conformist communities bounded together by commonality in religion. When

¹⁶ Cooper, *The Journal of William Dowsing*, 93-94.

¹⁷ Robert Hindry Mason, *The History of Norfolk, From Original Records and Other Authorities Preserved in Public and Private Collections* (London: Wertheimer, Leo & Co., 1885), 1-3.

¹⁸ Peter Gaunt, *The English Civil War: A Military History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 160-161.

politico-religious policies were enacted in the national sphere, the reverberation was felt in these small towns where Conformists confronted increasing intolerance.¹⁹

The central concern in the years leading up to and during the Interregnum was religious differences and not local social or economic issues. Political and religious affiliation continued to be of paramount significance in recruitment to civic office, and magistrates were displaced solely to serve partisan interests.²⁰ As national affairs played such a prominent role in defining local politics in Norfolk, so also the rise, fall, and realignment of political and religious groups in London and Westminster had a telling effect on the vicissitudes of Norwich factions. This was as true of the Independents, Presbyterians, and Conformists after 1645 as it had been of the Puritans during the Civil War. The period from 1645 to 1656 in Norfolk was in many respects a continuation of the early 1640s. The factional strife which characterized both periods was similar in nature and its impact on local politics. In both periods, the county was strongly influenced by but had little influence on national affairs. The city did not recede into provincial isolation after 1645, as did many other towns. National political issues were hotly disputed in Norwich and, translated in terms applicable to the city, provided the ideological basis of factional partisanship. Politically-active citizens kept one eye riveted on the guild-hall and the other on London and Parliament.

In such circumstances, the impact of the first years of the Interregnum on provincial urban governments was by no means uniform. The extent to which local officeholders were purged and towns radicalized depended upon the strength of local radical groups and the willingness or unwillingness of magistrates to take the Engagement. Apart from compliance with the Engagement, the Rump was content to let the localities work out their own accommodations. Some cities, including Newcastle, Bristol, and York, had already been remodeled during and after the first Civil War by the ejection of Royalists. Of the significant provincial capitals, only Norwich is

¹⁹ Mason, *The History of Norfolk*, 256.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 232-333.

known to have been strongly affected by the political and religious crises which split Parliament and London from 1644 to 1649. The Norwich supporters of Parliament and the army, who had so narrowly averted a disaster in April 1648 and had then repeatedly demonstrated their loyalty to national government, needed only a propitious moment to commence their own purge of the corporation.²¹

When Cromwell was reinstalled as Lord Protector in July 1657, a civic banquet at Norwich featured music from the city waits and trumpeters, and civic occasions at Ripon and Scarborough were similarly enlivened by the “town music” or “corporation music.”²² It had no leadership structure and a lack of ministers. In many cases, far from toleration, Puritan ministers often caused a schism in parishes because of their exclusion of the majority and their uncompromising and short-tempered stance.²³ The sacrament of baptism, for example, became more confusing for all, ministers, and laity alike. With the focus on the elect, it was sometimes difficult for parishioners to get their children baptized. In addition, there were questions over whether an illegitimate child could be baptized.

3.2 Perseverance Amongst Anxiety and Disorder

As the Interregnum proceeded, anxious English believed that the dangers presented by radical individuals and groups had become increasingly widespread and less governable. Gradually, these extremists had come to symbolize the Interregnum state’s inability to maintain order. The threat of religious pluralism heightened anxieties in the local parishes. This was exacerbated by personal interactions with unwelcome religious groups and individuals. The dissemination of their troublesome antics through networks of oral and print culture exasperated

²¹ *Ibid.*, 380-383.

²² Derek Hirst, “Locating the 1650s in England’s Seventeenth Century,” *History*, 263 (1996), 374.

²³ Bernard Capp, “The Religious Marketplace: Public Disputations in Civil War and Interregnum England,” *The English Historical Review*, 129, No. 536 (2014), 47.

issues. Frustrated communities took violent action against unwelcome ministers, radicals, and other nonconformists. A common enemy appeared in the shape of the Conformists who themselves rebelled against Parliamentary ordinances. The Rump Parliament's repealing of the Elizabeth Act of Uniformity in 1650 not only abolished mandatory religious uniformity, but it also ushered in a period best described as a "religious marketplace" where "rival versions of faith and practice were able to compete publicly for followers."²⁴

Hence, the Conformist clergy were held to a higher standard within English society than elsewhere in the British Isles. Much of this was shaped and fashioned by the Laudian program that supported ideas that a distinct and exalted clerical estate existed. This estate was held to be inhabited by pure and pious individuals, deserving of respect, even veneration. In this ideological stance, some of the clerics enthusiastically espoused Conformist liturgy. John Henson, who was the churchman at Terrington in Norfolk, described his clergy as "the ambassadors of Jesus Christ and Ministers of gold, to whom he is pleased to give a participation of his own essence and being."²⁵ Likewise, Edmund Mapletoft, rector of Anstey in nearby Hertfordshire, argued that "priests were supposed to have double the honor than the very rest," a common convention of the time.²⁶ However, evidence suggests that the rate to which Conformists found themselves accused of scandalous action actually increased throughout the Interregnum. Complaints against Conformist clergy were lodged for a variety of reasons by all levels of English society. For example, Minister Edward Powell of Billingford was accused of foul preaching when he asserted that his congregation might be again as "cities upon a hill," eminent and glorious in the eyes of the

²⁴ Capp, "The Religious Marketplace," 47; Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament 1648-1653* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 80-81; Jeffrey Collins, "The Church Settlement of Oliver Cromwell," 87, No. 285 (2002), 21-31.

²⁵ John Henson, *A narrative of John Henson, Master of Arts, and sometimes minister of Gods Word at Terrington in the county of Norfolk* (London, 1659), 2.

²⁶ BL, Add. 15,672, fol. 24.

people, rather than the poor view he held of them at the time of his sermon.²⁷ In 1649, imprisoned Norfolk minister Thomas Ramsey pondered openly, and controversially, about the state of religious affairs, “I do favor an orderly reformation, but not of a tumultuary; there is a difference between reforming what is amiss, and a transforming into a new shape.”²⁸ Ramsey was sequestered shortly before his imprisonment for his refuting of Puritan teachings. He would spend the opening month of the Interregnum imprisoned for his misdeeds.

When members of the clergy were imprisoned, not only did their families find themselves in dire straits, but they too sought to avail support from their community in order to increase morale. It was this essence of community that Conformists in local parishes utilized to aid their efforts at preservation. Distressed clerics expected a more sympathetic response from their relatives, turning instinctively to their extended families for relief after ejection. Conformist minister Philip Goddard “took up his heels and ran” from his parish in Norfolk to his Berkshire relations. Curate Thomas Warriner “immediately presented himself” to his relations in Yorkshire.²⁹ This was hardly surprising. Conformists defined themselves by their kinship networks. Nepotism went unchallenged, promotion of kith and kin was standard practice. Furthermore, displaced clergymen knew that managing a living provided an occupation and support for other family members. While supporting one’s family was an upright act befitting the social position of the clergyman, it also meant that nepotism, for better or worse, could help alleviate the stresses of the cleric while also giving employment to a loved one. For example, upon growing tired of living in his small parish, rector Thomas More sublet the collection of its tithes to his brother.³⁰ More resided in his other parish which, despite his “excellent” preaching, caused

²⁷ BL, Egeton 2985, ff. 321, 323.

²⁸ NRO, MC 98/1/16.

²⁹ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, ff. C3.257.

³⁰ Richard Gough, *The History of Myddle* (Pittsburg: Caliban Books, 1979), 16. For an overview of Myddle’s social and political history, see Robert Mayer, “‘The History of Myddle:’ Memory, History, and Power,” *Studies in Philology* 93, no. 1 (1996), 64-92.

Richard Gough to blame him for his frugality. “He arrived mainly once a month to officiate,” Gough writes, “He would ride to the church, go straight into the church, and after the Service, take his horse and ride back home. He regarded not the repair of the parsonage.”³¹ As parochial incumbents aged, it was natural for the next generation to act as curates and assume the daily running of the benefice. When Conformists were imprisoned for their actions or their family name marred for their beliefs, their next of kin continued to run their business.

The unrestrained blossoming of religious pluralism resulted in accusations of religious, social, and moral deviance within communities across the nation. The eradication of the consistory courts decentralized moral authority and allowed religious minorities a more significant degree of influence in their parishes. This abolition gradually elevated fears over religious, moral and even political disorder that triggered hostility and violence during the Interregnum.³²

One such clergyman was Thomas Reeve, who despite being imprisoned by the House of Commons in November 1642 for maligning and deriding the proceedings of Parliament, continued to preach to his Conformist congregation. Born in Langley, Norfolk, he was educated at Caius College, Cambridge, deeply entrenched in the work of Hooker during his tenure at the University.³³ On 19 June 1614, having graduated with his BA, he was ordained a priest at Norwich. For the next thirty years, Reeve kept close to his younger brother Michael, who had followed him to Caius in 1621, who also became a clergyman in Norfolk.³⁴ Together, the Reeves formed a small, tight-knit community of like-minded Conformists. These formative years would aid the Norfolk preacher as he battled against enemies of the church throughout the Civil War and Interregnum years.

³¹ Gough, *The History of Myddle*, 103.

³² Historians, such as Jeffrey Collins, Bernard Capp, and Christopher Hill have pointed to the part played by both Presbyterians and the Independents in triggering this fear. However, little is known of the fears brought about by Conformists. In the pockets of Norfolk shire during the late 1650s, it was stubborn Conformist clergymen who faced prosecution for their continued practice of the old liturgy. Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), 71-76. Collins, “The Church Settlement of Oliver Cromwell,” Bernard Capp, *Puritan Reformation and its Enemies in the Interregnum, 1649-1660* (London: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³³ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C 2.

³⁴ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C 157.

After his release from prison for his preaching, Reeve was ejected from his livings in August 1644 on numerous grounds. First, local Parliamentary authorities accused Reeve of observing Bishop Matthew Wren's *Injunctions*. Second, he was suspected of absenteeism, where he had been absent from his parishes for the past 12 months. Finally, he was charged with refusing to pay Parliamentary assessments, discouraging others from doing so, having not taken the covenant. Although together these charges amounted to financially weakening the clergyman, it swelled his and his congregation's religious conviction.³⁵ This is evident in his actions later in the decade which would cement his attempts at fostering community in his parish while also preaching in defiance of the Parliament's orders.

In 1647, he risked imprisonment when he preached the funeral sermon of fellow Conformist and sequestered clergyman Ephraim Udall, which would later be published as *Lazarus his Rest*.³⁶ The sermon was given in the height of the Civil Wars and is indicative of the importance in venerating fallen Conformists. During the Interregnum, he also continued to preach, with two particular sermons becoming popular amongst the Conformist community. The first sermon, *Certain Sermons, within the City of London* was closely followed by a second, *God's Plea for Nineveh, or, London's Precedent for Mercy*. The latter was dedicated to his "Honoured Friend" Thomas Rich, "a very eminent Citizen of London."³⁷ Both sermons are but examples of consistent activity of Conformity during the Interregnum, and suggest that the local parishes possessed great spheres of influence in the midst of suppression. Following the Restoration of the national Church, Reeve was awarded his for persistence at continuing to uphold and defend his Church. Reeve continued to champion his faith, publishing an impressive array of speeches

³⁵ Richard Cust, "Anti-Puritanism and Urban Politics: Charles I and Great Yarmouth," *The Historical Journal* 35, no. 1 (1992), 10.

³⁶ CSPD 1655, 95; Thomas Reeve, *Lazarus his rest preached in a sermon at the funerall of Mr. Ephraim Udall, that famous divine in London* (London, 1647).

³⁷ Thomas Reeve, *God's plea for Nineveh, or, London's precedent for mercy delivered in certain* (London, 1657), sig. A2r.

including *A Cedars Sad and Solemn Fall* (1661), *England's Restitution* (1661) and *England's Beauty* (1661), the latter dedicated to Charles II.

After the Restoration, Conformists assessed the encapsulating events of the Interregnum, and some such as John Cosin tried to provide a context for reconciliation. For the revised liturgy, Cosin created a new communal act of atonement. Thomas Reeve, for his part, preached on forgiveness,

There are none but Necromancers, which will call up the spirits of the deceased to work their magical ends. None but ravenous dogs, which will satisfy their greedy appetites with such Carrion. Were it unpriestly, unchristian, unmanly in me, to call any man Rebel who is become a Loyal Subject? Or him an heretic, who is turned Orthodox?³⁸

Indeed, Reeve asserted that Conformist sufferings seemed to “exceed our memory; this Age can scarcely relate them, and after-ages will scarcely believe them.” Going further, he would rhetorically ask his congregation, “Can a spectator consider them without anguish?”³⁹ Yet, the benefit of hindsight would suggest an answer to the affirmative. The fissures that ran deep in Interregnum England were dependent upon the rites and rituals outlawed. By criminalizing the very tenets of the Church of England, Conformist opponents strategically dismantled the core of the Church to displace its congregation and diminish its standing on the national stage. And, two tenets that caused controversy in the county of Norfolk, in particular, were baptism and death.

3.3 Baptism

Rituals of baptism were as sensitive and complex in Stuart England as they were under the previous Tudor regime.⁴⁰ Elements of controversy hovered over various matters, from the rites to

³⁸ Thomas Reeve, *England's Restitution, or the Man, the Man of Men, the States-man* (London, 1660), 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁰ Debates have arisen regarding the surveying of demographics as it relates to baptism throughout the English Revolution. In 1974, Dorothy McLaren, corrected “a popular misconception regarding the 1653 Marriage Act was propagated by Godfrey Davies. McLaren Davis had misconstrued proceedings, believing the writer thought that the Act of 1653 was generally a failed lapsed in 1657. She notes that, “It is true that he is discussing it with regard to the registration of births rather than baptisms. It is not clear whether he regards the whole of the Act of 1653 as a failure.”

the baptismal font itself. Yet despite the differences of religious style and taste which exercised controversialists between the accession of Elizabeth I and the demise of the later Stuarts, the service outlined in the Book of Common Prayer provided a framework for continuity and consensus.⁴¹ The order for the ministration of baptism served as a standard script, even if the participants disagreed on some of the protocols of performance.⁴² All of this was unsettled during the disturbances of the 1640s and the disruptions of the 1650s when the Church of England was temporarily swept aside.

The suspension of the episcopal hierarchy in 1642 affected the tenets of baptism during the Interregnum era. *The Directory of Publique Worship* declared that baptism was only to be performed by a minister in public, and that it was not to be unnecessarily delayed. The later Parliamentary ordinance of 1645 that authorized the replacement of the Prayer Book with the Directory also required dates of birth and baptism to be recorded in the parish register, although relatively few parishes followed orders.⁴³ By 1653, the institution of civil registration in England removed the need for baptisms to be registered.⁴⁴ Hence, a tendency to move away from traditional baptism was entrenched in society through legislation. Traditional objections to Church of England ritual, and radical rethinking of ecclesiastical organization and conduct, combined in the Interregnum era to transform, and in many places to obliterate, the customary form of baptism.⁴⁵

See Dorothy McLaren, "The Marriage Act of 1653: Its Influence on the Parish Registers," *Population Studies* 28, no. 2 (1974), 322.

⁴¹ For a wider discussion of baptism in early modern England, see P. M. Kitson "Religious Change and the Timing of Baptism in England, 1538-1750," *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (2009), 269-94; Tjondrowardojo Yudha Thianto, "Stories Baptismal Registers Told: Private Baptism in Seventeenth-Century England," *History* 95, no. 2 (2010), 177-93; Charles Miller, "The Signs of God's Love: Baptism and the Eucharist," In *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God: Exploring the Origins of Anglicanism*, edited by Charles Miller (Cambridge: James and Clark Co., 2013), 140-54.

⁴² Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908), 5-17.

⁴³ Charles Harding Firth and Robert Sangster Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 582.

⁴⁴ B. Midi Berry, and Robert Sangster Schofield, "Age at Baptism in Pre-Industrial England," *Population Studies* 25, no. 3 (1971), 453-456.

⁴⁵ Firth, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, i, 106.

In Norfolk, reports swelled of desecrations, repudiation of Laudian practice, and of parishioners taking control of the liturgy during the period. As the authority of the established Church unraveled during the opening years of the Long Parliament, nonconformist parishioners incited “affronts and insolences” to their Conformist minister, Richard Drake.⁴⁶ As the distressed minister recounted, the parish was severely divided. Baptism services quickly collapsed in disorder over the attempts to impose or to prevent the signing with the cross, following legislative guidelines. On one occasion, John Smith, a local blacksmith, “violently snatched his child out of the curate’s arms, before he had signed it with the cross, to the great offense of the sober-minded and the encouragement of others in disorder.”⁴⁷ Drake was a well-known Conformist. With the help of friends in Norfolk, he actively fought to preserve his Church. For example, he praised Matthew Smallwood, a local parochial clergyman, for continuing the rites of the established Church, despite having gained a new living after sequestration. His support of Smallwood is indicative of his, and many other Conformist ministers, efforts in Norfolk to bolster each others’ resistance to the Puritan whims.⁴⁸

Smallwood was also hounded by opponents for his insistence on ceremonialism in his services. It was Puritan attitudes that challenged the very basis of any ceremonial representation in the sacrament that Norfolk ministers, such as Smallwood, took such affront.⁴⁹ The prevalence of baptismal objections would continue to rise as Puritans who objected to the sign in baptism believed that the performative action was akin to heretical ceremonies that did not constitute proper faith or belief. After all, the sign of the cross, and performance of any ceremonies, could be undertaken without any real understanding or commitment to the underlying purpose. Just as in

⁴⁶ Bodl., Rawl. D158, fol. 42.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bodl., Rawl., D158, fol. 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Cambridge, images in high volumes were seen as a distraction, something in which the primary issues were at risk of being lost.

Such was the case in the parish church of Middleton at the baptism of a baby girl in 1652. One of the parishioners present that day, John Traps, confronted the curate by “coming up close and standing daringly by him” in an attempt to intimidate the Conformist minister into proper, Puritanical behavior. In another instance, Traps thwarted a minister’s attempt to christen another child later that same month. Traps informed the minister that he should not have held the girl out of her godmother’s arms, nor sign her with the cross. Physically interceding, the Puritan went so far as “flung the cloth over the face of the child, keeping his hand upon it and saying, “it is the mark of the beast.” Beyond Traps, reform was so fervent in Norfolk that when another minister attempted to make the sign of the cross on Giles Alton’s child, one woman “covered the child with some linen and kept it down with her hand,” while another woman held “off one of the curate’s hands which was kept behind him by the father of the child.” The parish was in an uproar, the minister dishonored, and the dignity of the sacrament severely diminished. The interruptions of ceremony by zealous Puritans challenging the Conformist ministers reverberated throughout the local parishes, and was reflective of the disorder occurring through England proper. Liturgical disagreements that might earlier have been dealt with by selective accommodation or sleight of hand now risked plunging the community into anarchy.⁵⁰

In the parish of Colton saw the local anonymous rector condemned for his actions. Forced by threats to give up making the sign of the cross in baptism, he deftly announced “We do not receive this child into the assembly of Christ’s flock, nor do we sign it in a symbol that it shall hereafter be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.”⁵¹ A further instance involved the well-known Sir Ralph and Lady Verne. When both learned of their pregnancy, Lady Verney made

⁵⁰ Bodl., Rawl. D158, fol. 47.

⁵¹ Bodl., Rawl. D158, fol. 43.

plans for christening the child they expected in the summer of 1647.⁵² Lady Mary promised to “get a minister in the house that will do it the old way, for ‘tis not the fashion here to have godfathers and godmothers, but for the father to bring the child to church and answer for it.”⁵³ Sir Ralph offered more cautious advice, appropriate for the temper of the times.

Now for the christening, I pray give no offence to the state; should it be done in the old way perhaps it may bring more trouble upon you than you can imagine, and all to no purpose; for so it be done with ordinary water, and that these words, “I baptize thee in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost” be used with the water, I know the child is well baptized. All the rest is but a matter of form and ceremony which differs almost in every country.⁵⁴

Contemporary diarist Alice Thornton would have agreed. Although she took pains to secure proper baptism for her children born in the 1650s, she asserted that minister Michael Siddall, “usually performed the office, with close relations serving as witnesses.” However, the disruptions induced by Parliament meant that Siddall’s services were no longer available. Thornton recalled that her sister died in childbirth of “a son named Francis, whom I baptized.”⁵⁵ This suggests that she assumed the traditional duty of the midwife and administered emergency baptism, though it could also mean that she merely served as a Godmother. Since soldiers occupied the sister's house at the time, Thornton likely had no choice but to undertake the sacrament by herself.

Such episodes are indicative of how the Interregnum embodied a period of freedom, experiment, and confused recrimination. Baptism was one of the issues that split families, communities, and congregations. Although there appears no clear pattern to this surge of

⁵² Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby, and Helen Wilcox, eds. *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 153.

⁵³ Frances Parthenope Verney, *Memoirs of the Verney Family During the Civil War*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green & co., 1892), 2:258-264.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Charles Jackson, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton of East Newton, Co. York* (Durham: Society by Andrews and Co., 1875), 81, 92, 94. See also Raymond A. Anselment, “The Teares of Nature: Seventeenth-Century Parental Bereavement,” *Modern Philology* 91, no. 1 (1993), 26-53.

ceremonial disorder in the insular communities, local contentions mirrored national divisions. Stories multiplied of incivility towards ministers, travesties of the sacrament, mock baptism of animals, rebaptism of adults, and even urination in the font.⁵⁶ Reports of such outrages horrified some observers, entertained others, and added to the heightened instability following the collapse of ecclesiastical discipline.⁵⁷

Nonetheless, complicating the matter of suppression were the sectarian groups seeking to pressure Conformists into submission. Baptists and Anabaptists, virtually unheard of in England since the sixteenth century, emerged among the most numerous sectarians to challenge the very notion of infant baptism. Baptism, these sects argued, was the mark of the born-again Christian, and full immersion the declaratory ceremony of the mature believer.⁵⁸ For their part, Quakers rejected the ceremony altogether.⁵⁹ They regarded baptism as a spiritual reality, but that they precluded the use of water or ritual to effect or symbolize that reality. Yet, despite wide contextual evidence existing, the demography of religious affiliation in this period has so far evaded scholarly investigation. Indeed, we can do little more than guess at the strength of various religious factions.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena: Or a Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time* (London: 1646), 29.

⁵⁷ Firth, *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, i. 104, 178, 184.

⁵⁸ J. F. McGregor, "The Baptists: Fount of All Heresy," in *Radical Religion in the English Revolution*, edited by J. F. McGregor and Barry Reay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 23-68.

⁵⁹ Quakerism had its early beginnings in the north of England. The early development of the sectary is credited to the outgrowth of the personal insights expressed by the scriptural writings of one of its early preachers and leaders, George Fox. The English dissenter posited that it was conceivable to have a direct experience of Christ without the aid of an ordained clergy. He rejected the role of a mediator whom operated as a communicative vehicle from God to his disciple. It was the Quakers themselves who alienated the clergy, some of whom in the north seem initially to have been sympathetic. Indiscriminate attacks on hirelings, tithes and the sanctity of ecclesiastical buildings made it impossible for any priest to support them and continue to hold his living. See H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1994), 52-69.

⁶⁰ Among the tracts published during this period discussing baptism were A.R., *A Treatise of the Vanity of Childish Baptism* by (1642), Thomas Bakewell *The Dippers Plunged in a Sea of Absurdities* (1650) and many similar treatises, confutations, vindications, and responses on the meaning and conduct of baptism. The London bookseller George Thomason collected over 125 titles explicitly addressing this topic between 1642 and 1660. Jason McElligott, *The Perils of Print Culture: Book, Print and Publishing History in Theory* (London: Palgrave, 2014), 170-172.

Despite continued pressures, Conformists persisted in continuing their practices. Should Conformists be found adhering to their Church, potential imprisonment awaited. As aforementioned, Richard Drake praised his friend Matthew Smallwood for continuing the baptismal rites of the Church, despite having gained a new living after sequestration and risking penalties. Those without livings had less to lose and often relied on income from conducting Prayer Book services. The “main sustenance” of one parochial clergyman George Forster, was the “Gifts and presents which he got for Baptisms and some other private offices.”⁶¹ He was imprisoned twice for doing so. Most Conformist ministers did what they could to remain within the ministry, often making compromises to do so. In addition to baptism, rites and practices involving the dead also attracted the detraction of nonconformists and Puritans alike.

3.4 Death

In addition to baptism, the rites and practices involving death attracted opponents of the disestablished Church.⁶² The extent to which Parliamentary officials acted against Conformists partaking in rituals associated with the dead varied within the county. Where some were confronted with provocation through words, other were physically threatened. In the parish of Barrow, local minister Nathaniel Gill described how, in quest of some means of subsistence, he travelled “to London,” seeking to “preach and address persons of honor.” However, he was refused admittance at a local Church because of his ragged condition. Upon returning to his parish, he sought to attend the funeral of a parishioner, but was once again mocked by local officials for his “tattered rags.” The local officials seemingly overlooked his attendance at the funeral service, but rather taunted

⁶¹ Bodl., Rawl. D158, fol. 17.

⁶² For a wider discussion of death in the early modern period in England, see Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 572–81; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971); David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977), 96-134; Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

the minster for his unkempt appearance. Scorned remarks were his only form of punishment. Some clergymen, however, were not so fortunate as they faced physical intimidation for their administering of funeral rites. In one ill-fated episode, Norfolk rector Edward Franklin was attacked by charging Parliamentary forces when close relatives gathered at his household to celebrate the death of a parishioner. A local parishioner recorded the incident stating, “the residence was beset by some of Cromwell’s soldiers. The rector endeavoring to make his escape over the Garden, a pale ran into his groin, of which he soon after died.”⁶³

Such lamentations were all the more compounded when the rituals and practices involved in expressing loss and the burial of the dead became dismantled and outlawed. Despite the conceit that death entailed release, and notwithstanding the great hope that the departed had gone ahead to heaven, survivors often experienced convulsions of grief. Sorrow and pain were weighty matters to experience. Funeral rituals were “not so much a question of dealing with a corpse as of reaffirming the secular and spiritual order utilizing a corpse.”⁶⁴ Yet, Conformists throughout the Interregnum were deprived of the remedy of prayers for the dead. They were equally met with severe challenges to commemorate the dead while also evading letters of Parliament.

Opposition to practices involving the dead were twofold. First, common cultural practice of the day turned each rite of passage into a social and collective event. Thus, the gathering of numerous Conformists in a private space alarmed officials whose livelihoods rested on supplanting revolt. Moreover, officials were fearful that those in attendance could be influenced by their peers to adopt certain behaviors on a largely emotional, rather than rational, basis. Given the emotional nature incited by a death, anxious officials sought to disband congregations and persecute those in attendance.⁶⁵ Beyond the pragmatic, anxieties were rooted in the theological underpinnings

⁶³ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C1.255.

⁶⁴ R. C. Finucane, “Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion: Social Ideals and Death Rituals in the Later Middle Ages,” in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, edited by Joachim Whaley (New York, 1982), 41.

⁶⁵ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 390.

involving bereavement. Conformists, echoing Hooker, understood and expounded the sacraments as major instruments through which the rites were incorporated into the mystical body of Christ.

Puritan complaints against Conformists practices regarding the dead can also be traced to matters involving the Book of Common Prayer and assumed elements of popery. Some Puritans went beyond local ministers to the bishops in the airing of their concerns. They found less to argue about in the “Order for Burial of the Dead” than in many other services in the Book of Common Prayer, but that did not stop them finding fault with unreformed burial customs. Their main area of complaint concerned traditional cultural activities that preceded the actual interment of the body. For example, Conformists promoted an officially prescribed burial service performed by a minister dressed in his vestments, who prayed over the body, which was then interred in consecrated ground. Other rituals, such as the tolling of the church bell, and erecting tombstones and monuments drew condemnation from Church opponents.⁶⁶

Parliament enforced restrictions concerning ceremonialism and liturgical practices. Such sentiments were reinforced by the “Order for the burial of the dead,” which was among the ceremonies in the Book of Common Prayer banned by Parliament. After the 1645 ordinance, it was illegal to bury a person according to these rites. The Directory for the Public Worship of God

⁶⁶ Further, the formal religious burial service also drew Puritan criticism. The view of popish abuses yet remaining in the English Church was attached to the 1572 *Admonition to the Parliament*. The *Admonition* catalogued a variety of practices that Puritans did find offensive, “They appoint a prescript kind of service to bury the dead, and that which is the duty of every Christian they tie alone to the minister, whereby prayer for the dead is maintained ... We say nothing of the threefold peal because that is rather licensed by Injunction than commanded in their book; nor of their strange mourning by changing their garments, which if it be not hypocritical, yet it is superstitious and heathenish, because it is used only of custom; nor of burial sermons, which are put in place of trentals, whereout spring many abuses, and therefore in the best reformed churches are removed. As for the superstitions used both in country and city, for the place of burial, which way they must lie, how they must be fetched to church, the minister meeting them at church stile with surplice, with a company of greedy clerks, that a cross white or black must be set upon the dead corpse, that bread must be given to the poor, and offerings in burial time used, and cakes sent abroad to friends, because these are rather used by custom and superstition than by the authority of the book.” These deep-rooted reservations represent the traditional Catholic practices that the Church of England no longer sanctioned. It also portrays the fundamental misgivings of the official rubric of the Book of Common Prayer that Presbyterians thought hearkened back to Rome. *Admonition to the Parliament* (1572); Walter Howard Frere and Charles Edward Douglas, eds. *Puritan Manifestoes: A Study of the Origins of Puritan Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), 28.

rejected the burial rites along with the other “unprofitable and burdensome” ceremonies. It was their expressed opinion that the dead should receive,

Public Burial, and there immediately interred, without any Ceremony. And because the customs of kneeling down, and praying by, or towards the dead Corps, and other such usages, in the place where it lies, before it be carried to Burial, are Superstitious: and for that, praying, reading, and singing both in going to, and at the Grave, have been grossly abused, are no way beneficial to the dead, and have proved many ways hurtful to the living, therefore let all such things be laid aside.⁶⁷

Determined nonconformists rehashed the litany of the Presbyterian *Admonition of Parliament*, and separatists continued to argue for burial with “gravity and sobriety” but “without either singing or reading” or “any ceremonies of praying or preaching.”⁶⁸ Sectarians also posited “that the children of God may bury their dead without the presence of a minister,” claiming that “in the primitive church the dead were buried by their friends, and burial was not a function of the minister until the time of popery.”⁶⁹ They wanted burial without funerals, interment without ceremony. Nevertheless, despite the sporadic stream of Puritan condemnation, there was no distinctive “Puritan way of death” in Stuart England.⁷⁰ The Cromwellian regime allowed broad discretion to the parties involved and permitted a broad diversity of interment practices. In any case, funerary rites lacked the disciplinary machinery to secure any kind of homogeneity. There were, however, instances of Conformist practices relating to the dead abound during the Interregnum. In Norfolk, John Evelyn, was able to give his mother-in-law, Lady Browne, a traditional religious funeral in October 1652. Recalling the ceremony, he wrote that

We carried her in a hearse and interred her in the church near Sir Richard’s relations accompanied with many coaches of friends, and other persons of quality; with all decent ceremony, and according to the church office, which I obtained might be permitted, after

⁶⁷ *A Directory for the Publick Worship of God Throughout The Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1645), 73-74.

⁶⁸ Canne, *A Necessity of Separation from the Church of England* (Amsterdam, 1634), 104.

⁶⁹ Peel, *The Second Part of Register*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1915), 1:45.

⁷⁰ Cressy, *Dangerous Talk*, 404.

it had not been used in that church of seven years before, to the great satisfaction of that innumerable multitude who were there.⁷¹

Beyond local episodes depicting the dead, those concerned in the realm of science were compelled to publish on the restriction of burial rites. This occurrence represented a swift shift from an understanding of burial rights in the cultural and religious sense to one of a more intellectual basis. In 1658, Norwich parishioner and physician Thomas Browne published *Urn Buria*

l and *The Garden of Cyrus*.⁷² Both tracts portray Browne's anxiety concerning ritual order, a concern sparked by the ongoing bouts in his diocese concerning Conformist burial rites.⁷³ Where his earlier *Religio Medici* had offered professions of faith, these late texts examine obliquely and more nervously the value of ceremony and ritual in human life.⁷⁴

Urn Burial, Browne's treatise on funeral practices, was written and published when the burial rites of the church were forbidden. As a text examining burial practices in different historical times, countries, and cultures, Browne takes as his subject what was the site of contemporary politico-religious conflict, humanly ordained ceremony, of which burial rites are a particularly notable example. For Browne's examination of burial practices is in part a defense of Conformists burial rites and, indeed, of ceremony more largely. He begins with a focus on the recently discovered urns and on specific burial customs. However, just as he moves from the particular

⁷¹ John Evelyn, "The Diary of John Evelyn," in *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 2 vols. ed. William Bray (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1902), 1:203.

⁷² Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial, or, a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk* (London, 1658); *The Garden of Cyrus, or The Quincuncial Lozenge, or Network Plantations of the Ancients, naturally, artificially, mystically considere* (London, 1658).

⁷³ Much for these musings can be traced to his early travels in the Netherlands and Ireland. Browne's musing were also motivated by his pursuit to clarify his Englishness in religious terms. In this "private exercise, or, rather a memorial unto me than an example or rule unto any other," he evaluated his religious position after seeing the Roman Catholicism of Ireland, France, and Italy, and the Calvinism of the Netherlands, neither of which he wholly condemns or accepts. Echoing Hooker's via media, the physician declared that he preferred a middle way guided by scripture above all, by the Church of England, and in default of them, by his own powers of reason. This was further expounded his works during the Interregnum. William P. Dunn, Sir Thomas Browne, *A Study in Religious Philosophy*, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1950), 4-7.

⁷⁴ Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (London, 1641).

Norfolk burials to the ways humans have ceremoniously treated the dead body, his concerns broaden from specific rites of burial to broad conclusions about the role of religious ceremony. The Norfolk urns become an occasion to explore how humans have treated death and the place of ceremony in human experience. Implicitly, *Urn Burial* defends the legitimacy of burial rites, and of ceremony more largely, confirming the arguments of Conformists who had defended observance in the Church of England.

Urn Burial was not merely a Laudian defense of ceremony. It was also grounded in the ideological assumptions that had shaped the polemical apologies for religious ceremony. Browne approached his inquiry into the variety of human burial practices assuming that these practices are significant, that they have expounded meaning. He concludes by examining the “reason” underlying burial customs, and ponders whether Conformists attribute burial of the dead to be rooted in the natural life cycle.

Some being of the opinion of Thales, that water was the original of all things, thought it most equal to submit unto the principle of putrefaction, and conclude in a moist resentment. Others conceived it most natural to end in fire, as due unto the master principle in composition, according to the doctrine of Heraclitus.⁷⁵

In this case, the burial ritual symbolizes an attempt to return to the origin of order in the hope of renewed life. The fact that there is some “reason” behind burial rites is what enables them to function symbolically. The belief that ceremonies are not meaningless but “significant” links Browne’s discourse with Hooker’s defense of religious rite. Together, “reason” illuminates how the rites and rituals associated with burial are an integral part of the Conformist culture. The rites reinforced the values of the Conformist community through the active participation of the congregation.⁷⁶ The rituals also embodied pre-planned events of varying formality, social,

⁷⁵ Browne, *Urn Burial*, 137.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 112-123.

religious elements. It must also be noted that burial rites and ritual have both hold explicit and covert purposes. The most obvious purpose of burial contributes to respecting the body of the dead and celebrating their temporal life. The hidden purpose, however, is where the celebration of the sacred occurs. Thus, for Conformists, burial rites and rituals were a mechanism that produced order and fostered communal relations in a period exemplified by disorder and turmoil.

3.5 Conclusion

As is evident from the above events taking place in Norfolk, the remnants of Conformity were functional during the Interregnum. Where clergymen such as Thomas Reeve, Thomas Warriner, Nathaniel Gill, and Edward Franklin serve as examples of leaders relentless in their pursuit of preservation, the community came together to uphold and protect the rituals and rites embedded in the Conformist tradition. Although the sacraments of baptism and rituals involved in honoring the dead point to the prevalence of Conformist preservation, these are but two of how we can trace the Church of England was defended and persevered. Others included the observing of holy festivals and celebrating of holy matrimony. For Norfolk, however, the Restoration would permit the official restoration of these tenets. Nathaniel Gill, for example, also recorded how he could, at last, preach on Christmas Day 1660, after being sequestered employing “traitors, rebels, anabaptists, Quakers and Presbyterians.”⁷⁷ Another Norfolk incumbent, Henry Watts, listed his joy at observing Christmas festivities in his hometown. Indeed, as these brief examples suggest, the banning of Christmas served as a contentious period of rupture in all of England. And, like in Norfolk, the sparking of Conformist revolt elsewhere in England.

⁷⁷ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C 7a.

CHAPTER 4. SUFFOLK

Few counties were as remarkable for Conformist discontent as Suffolk.¹ The county's churches bear the marks of the Long Parliament's commission "for the defacing, demolishing, and quite taking away of all images, altars, or tables turned altar-wise, crucifixes, superstitious pictures, monuments, and reliques of idolatry, out of all churches and chapels."² In Bredfield, the local clergyman, Alexander Clarke, "refused to let the churchwardens level the ground where the altar stood because it was holy and consecrated, and not fit to be thrown out or mixed with common earth," and "protested at the changes," to little effect.³ At Melton, when Parliament ordered the Communion table to be moved from the east window the rector, William Pratt, "commanded it to be set there again," his defiance quaint in the face of such overwhelming adversity. Likewise, at Finningham, the rector, Edmund Mayor, defied the Parliamentary order after the rails were removed and the table brought down. Seeking the help of the sexton to "set it up once again, saying that it is there where it should stand," he too made a stand against the Cromwellian regime.⁴ Further examples, like that at Grundisburgh, exist. There, after a communion table was "brought down into the usual place," Edward Barton, the rector, "refused to administer the sacrament." In defiance of the vicissitudes, William Proctor, the Conformist rector of Stradishall, observed the letter of the Act of Parliament, but defied the spirit of the newly approved arrangement. Recalling the ordeal, he wrote that "after the rails were taken away from the place," he substituted forms, or benches, and made the communicants kneel there instead.⁵ All of these cases, the sheer frequency

¹ I owe thanks to Robert Bucholz who generously provided early critiques on this chapter and provided feedback on source locations regarding alehouses during the Interregnum era.

² Oliver Cromwell, *Memoirs of the protector, Oliver Cromwell, and of his sons, Richard and Henry* (London, 1820), 56.

³ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C5.82.

⁴ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C5.9.

⁵ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C5.

of them in Suffolk, underline the overwhelming vitriol existing against the supposedly triumphant Cromwellian government.

Indeed, the Conformists of Suffolk resisted authority in their local parishes, remonstrating against the changes in liturgical practice and the rituals involving the sacraments. However, the frequency of examples of this protestation pale in comparison to other, more vivid, instances. Indeed, few reacted so wildly as the minister of Waldringfield, Andrew Sandiland, a man “given to superstitious and vain gestures in the church” including “bowing towards the communion table.” Enraged by the dismantling of his beloved altar rails, Sandiland “charged into the church porch with his pistol charged and threatened to dispatch the first that came out of the church.” Even after the rails were removed from the chantry, he declined to administer the sacrament unless communicants genuflected at their former place by the chancel steps, “where some were pained, and would other parishioners not receive the communion.”⁶

Despite such striking demonstrations as Sandilands, the religious situation in Interregnum Suffolk remains insufficiently analyzed, often focusing on the viewpoint of Congregationalists and Quakers. The study of religion in the county has been tightly associated with questions of economic and political alliances, rather than standing independently as a valid area of interest. Thus, what is missing in this historiography is an examination of those who remained loyal to the disestablished Church in Suffolk. The two sides in England’s religious wars stood for incompatible values and ideals. The Puritan ethos of Godly discipline and moral reformation, reinforced by humanist values of civility, sobriety, and good order, was pitted against a rival ethos of good fellowship’ and festive traditions. In Suffolk, these fissures ran deep, across political and economic social strata.⁷

⁶ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C6.

⁷ Rev. John James Raven, *The History of Suffolk* (London: Elliot Stock, 1907), 45-49.

Succinctly, Suffolk was a county inundated with efforts to preserve the Church of England's practices despite being an equally significant crucible for Puritan reform.⁸ It followed, then, that resistance to Puritan religious innovation was met with exceptionally stiff confrontations. By interweaving the confessional narratives from this locality, three critical issues can be addressed. First, in the course of their years of struggle, Conformists in Suffolk both formulated and fostered a set of shared communal values that helped sustain traditional Church of England beliefs. However, this was not without disruption and violence. By examining these disturbances, one can understand how the suppression was not merely enacted through legislation, but also strategized at a local level through both propaganda and physical force. Second, this chapter will examine the importance of how events in the festive calendar, such as Christmas, played in the Conformist community. In times of disorder personified by poor morale, merriments were often the only form of escape. Thus, an investigation of how Conformists persevered in their faith through the religious festival is essential in understanding of how local parishes became an indicator to insular revolts against Cromwellian policy.⁹ Finally, the issue of toleration, and the interpretation that the seventeenth century was a crucial period in the formation of the Church of England, is further complicated once employing these localized narratives. While this can be demonstrated by tracing the continuing popular attachment to prayer-book services despite newly implemented ordinances, how they did so beyond this is not apparent. Summarily, analyzing the

⁸ For an account of the ejection procedures of Parliament's Committee for Scandalous Ministers and then its Committee for Plundered Ministers, see Clive. Holmes, ed. *The Suffolk Committees for Scandalous Ministers 1644-1646* (Ipswich: The Suffolk Records Society, 1970).

⁹ Between 1642-1660, Parliament enacted thirty-eight ordinances dealing with public and private morality. Also, it enacted many ordinances dealing with more strictly ecclesiastical affairs. Specifically, the form and manner of public worship, presentation to livings, the payment of tithes, and the like. These Ordinances included, but are not limited to: *Ordinance for taking away the Book of Common Prayer and putting in Execution the Directory for the Public Worship of God* (4 January 1644/5), *Act against several atheistic, blasphemous and execrable opinions derogatory to the honour of God, and destructive to human society* (9 August 1650), and *Act touching Marriages and the registering thereof, and also touching Birth and Burials* (24 August 1653).

role of Conformist doctrines and rituals relating to holy matrimony in Suffolk will shed light on the wider Conformist practices of Interregnum England.

4.1 Contextualizing Suffolk's Conformity

Suffolk's religious agenda during the Interregnum was dominated by numerous factors emanating from the turbulent events sparked by the Civil Wars. Within the county, there existed a political tension stemming from national measures such as Pride's Purge. Suffolk was a prominent Parliamentary shire, and as such, represented a hotbed for Puritan sympathies. Moreover, the county's political alignment drew fears of rebellion and discontent. At the local level, for example, the existence of secret Royalist groups such as the Sealed Knot caused deep-seated anxieties of a Royalist revolt in the region. Matters were compounded by the actions of Conformists who refused to follow Cromwellian orders, and who continued to practice their religion. Together, this amalgamation of political and religious anxieties shaped the lived experience in Suffolk.

Conformists of Suffolk were appalled at the execution of Charles I in January 1649. Among those most active of the Roundheads was Nathaniel Bacon of Ipswich, an MP for Cambridge University since 1645. He concluded his famous *Annalls of Ipswicke*, stating, "The last day of Jan: puts a sad period into my pen."¹⁰ The last day of January referred to the King's execution, so shocking to Bacon and many of his constituents. Another critical Suffolk Roundhead opposed to Charles I's execution was Sir Thomas Bedingfield of Darsham, a Judge of the Common Pleas in 1648 and a nominated county committee member in 1647/48. Bedingfield was one of six judges who, after the execution of Charles, "were not satisfied to hold" under the new commissions from

¹⁰ Nathaniel Bacon, *The Aannalls of Ipswicke*, ed. William H. Richardson (Ipswich, S. H. Cowell, 1884), 550.

Parliament. He retired from the Bench in December 1648, and was later appointed Sergeant-at-Law by Charles II in June 1660.¹¹

It was not only Bacon and Bedingfield who opposed both Pride's Purge and the regicide on 1649, most of Suffolk's MPs did as well. Of the 471 MPs for England and Wales, the Purge can be divided into five groups. First were the *active* revolutionaries who supported Pride's Purge, the trial, and execution of the King. Second were the *abstainers* who were not secluded by Colonel Pride but exhibited their opposition by averting from Parliament at least until the spring of 1649. Third, the *secluded* who were not allowed to take their seats. Fourth, the *imprisoned* who were the core of the Army's enemies. Finally, the *Conformists* who avoided formal commitment at the time of the purge but accepted the *fait accompli* in February 1649 when they could no longer be incriminated in the execution of the King.¹² The arrest of forty-five MPs and the seclusion from Parliament of 186 more MPs by soldiers under Colonel Thomas Pride on 6 December, 1649, known as Pride's Purge, halted negotiations between Parliament and Charles I.¹³ Of those, eight were from Suffolk.¹⁴ The remaining MPs in Parliament, known as the Rump, moved to impeach the King shortly thereafter on 28 December.¹⁵

¹¹ Thomas Bayly Howell, Thomas Jones Howell, William Cobbett, and David Jardine, eds. *A Complete collection of state trials and proceedings for high treason and other crimes and misdemeanors from the earliest period to the year 1783*, 21 vols. (London, T. C. Hansard, 1816), 4:1249.

¹² David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1-24.

¹³ Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, 1-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 366-390. Underdown provides an essential table noting the names of all MPs eligible to sit at any time between 6 December 1648 and 31 January 1649. Of the sixteen MPs located in the county of Suffolk, eight were secluded in Pride's Purge. Aldeburgh's MP Squire Bence died in 1648, leaving eight remaining MPs after the Purge.

¹⁵ For literature on the trial of Charles I, see Glenn Burgess, "Regicide: The Execution of Charles I and English Political Thought," in *Murder and Monarchy: Regicide in European History, 1300-1800*, edited Robert von Friedeburg (London: Palgrave, 2004), 212-236; Clive Holmes, "The Trial and Execution of Charles I," *Historical Journal*, 53 (2010): 289-316; Sean Kelsey, "The Death of Charles V," *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), 727-754; "The Trial of Charles I," *English Historical Review*, 118 (2003), 583-616; Mark Kishlansky, "Mission Impossible: Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, and the Regicide," *English Historical Review*, 125 (2010), 844-874; Howard Nenner, "The Trial of Charles I and the Failed Search for a Bounded Monarchy," in *Restoration, Ideology, and Revolution*, ed. Gordon J. Schochet, P. E. Tatspaugh, and Carol Brobeck (Washington, D.C., Folger Institute of the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1990), 1-21.

Pride's Purge and the upheaval of 1648-9 was as inextricably linked to matters of religion as it was to political concerns. The men who led Parliament into war earlier in 1642, and the overwhelming majority of their committed, or reluctant gentry supporters were moderate reformers in both the Church and the State. In the end, they were pushed aside by a handful of revolutionaries. Specifically, a small handful of MPs in Parliament such as Sir William Constable and Francis Allen.¹⁶ These MPs were supported by a much more significant number of lower-class men in the Army and the country at large, making their power disproportionate from their actual support throughout all of England. Some of the revolutionaries in Parliament, those from whom the main initiatives came, were motivated not so much by any sharply distinguished theology. Rather, they were driven by a Puritan determination to achieve the reformation of society fiercer than that exhibited by the original leadership. For them, at least, Puritan idealism would triumph over constitutional conservatism. A reform movement would become a revolutionary one.¹⁷

Royalist conspiracy during the Interregnum justifiably alarmed the government.¹⁸ The Conformists active in Suffolk generated a substantial climate of fear and conspiracy within their locale. By 1655, the danger of such fomenting was readily apparent. Royalist risings, planned for March, had failed in North-East England, Yorkshire, and the Welsh border. However, in southern England, John Penruddock's rising was not as lacking for sufficient support on the ground. Nonetheless, the regime quickly crushed it. Afterward, Oliver Cromwell established the rule of the ten Major-Generals, each in charge of a district, ending any major agitation.¹⁹ To that end, in 1656 major generals, such as Charles Worsley, drew up lists of suspects that accounted for those believed to have Royalist sympathies. And, in most cases, the accused's domiciles, societal status,

¹⁶ George Yule, "Independents and Revolutionaries." *Journal of British Studies* 7, no. 2 (1968), 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 23-24.

¹⁸ Jason McElligott and David L. Smith, eds. *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 3.

¹⁹ Christopher Durston, *Cromwell's Major-Generals: Godly Government during the English Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 130.

and occupation are also mentioned.²⁰ Such lists were drawn up in the eastern counties, even after falling quiescent in preceding years. Employing these rosters, it is apparent that the Suffolk, and Norfolk, lists suggested how the Royalists had a poorly structured command system. Such a weakness manifested as much of the authority was applied underground, and this proved a particular chief flaw of their cause in 1656, especially among the commoners.²¹

In Suffolk, at least, Royalism remained a subversive movement throughout the Interregnum.²² The existence of secret Royalist groups manifested fear amongst Parliamentarians in the region. The Sealed Knot was the most infamous of these groups, as Parliamentarians considered the association a Royalist secret society working to restore the monarchy. The Sealed Knot was established before the end of 1653 and had strong connections with East Anglia by the end of the decade.²³ Two eminent Suffolk gentlemen, Robert Naunton of Letheringham, an ex-Royalist activist, and Sir Robert Wingfield of Easton were heavily implicated in the plotting of the Sealed Knot, having provided money and promising horses. About the time of Sir George Booth's rising in 1659, occurring mainly in Lancashire and Cheshire, Sir Lionel Tollemache of Helmingham Hall, though not a conspirator himself and a neutral in the Civil Wars, allowed the Sealed Knot to meet in his house. At his manor, shrouded in seclusion, officers were enlisted by Colonel William Rolleston and Sir Lionel Fanshaw.²⁴

Whereas the above governmental affairs intrinsically trickled down to Suffolk's local politics, religious matters throughout the shire were dominated by local parochial matters concerning Quakers and Independents. Both posed a challenge to Conformists as they diversified

²⁰ Ibid., 190.

²¹ Ibid., 84, 136.

²² Alan Milner Everitt, *Suffolk and the The Great Rebellion* (Ipswich: Suffolk Cowell, 1961), 5; See also *The Local Community And the Great Rebellion* (London: Historical Association, 1969).

²³ Andrew Richard Warmington, *Civil War, Interregnum and restoration in Gloucestershire, 1640-1672* (Woodbridge: Royal Historical Society, 1997), 155.

²⁴ Geoffrey Smith, *Royalist Agents, Conspirators, and Spies: Their Role in the British Civil Wars, 1640-1660* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2010), 46-48.

the religious landscape in the local parishes. Independents proved most influential during the Commonwealth under the aegis of Cromwell, who dominated that decade. Only three Independent churches existed before the death of Charles I: at Walpole, Wrentham, and Bury St Edmunds. However, during the Interregnum at least fourteen others were formed. Of those, only two Independent churches existed in Suffolk before the Restoration: at Market Weston and at Bury, an old Brownists center. Of these, both were of the non-separating kind. Specifically, their adherents believed in a decentralized national Church. Indeed, in the 1650s the outstanding characteristic of East Anglian Congregationalism is the holding by the ministers of livings in the Established Church concomitantly with their pastorates of Congregational Churches. These beneficed clergies served both the entire parish, composed of the regenerate and unregenerate, and their gathered Church of visible saints. John Manning, Vicar of Sibton, was also the pastor to a nearby gathered church at Rendham. Thomas Spurdance, Rector of Rushmere, equally served as a pastor of a Congregational church in neighboring Henstead.²⁵ Even at Wrentham, where John Phillip was Rector, we find Congregationalist belief promoted. However, in Phillip's case, he limited church membership and the sacraments to the Godly, while not denying others the right to attend.²⁶

In short, the Interregnum in Suffolk was a period of intolerance exacerbated by the threat posed by Royalist conspiracy. The disruption felt on the pulpit and in the pews also manifested into bouts of violence on the streets of Suffolk. All of this action in Suffolk is reflective of a wider dispute facing the Cromwellian regime and the religious establishment on the national stage.

²⁵ John Browne, *History of Congregationalism and Memorials of the Churches in Norfolk and Suffolk* (London: Jarrold and Sons, 1977), 2, 395, 10, 40.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 528, 290, 70.

4.2 Suffolk's Streets: Public Disturbances and Cheap Print

Periods of warfare can “legitimize” violence towards civilians.²⁷ As the Interregnum progressed, violent clashes centered on the locality of the parish church. Proportionally more attacks were reported in newsbooks where lingered tensions from the Civil Wars raged, especially in the South East.²⁸ Disruption of church services by soldiers, frequently targeting surplices and service books, appear to have been widespread. For example, Edward Lane was “dragged out from his Reading Desk by the ears” into the churchyard in Newmarket, his Puritan assailants mocking and burning his surplice and Common Prayer Book.²⁹ Book burnings were enacted to both deter Conformists from employing their Prayer Book and to reinforce repressive measures throughout the parish.³⁰ Contemporary Richard Hall remembered service books burning in the marketplace at Suffolk, accompanied by “blowing and piping upon destroyed organ pipes” and a “lewd wretch” who mockingly imitated the bishop. Another Conformist witness, one Richard Towgood, remembered similar performances in Suffolk.

They broke down organs in the Cathedral in a tumultuous manner; the pipes were picked up by a rabble of rude fellows, women, boys, and girls who went all about the streets tooting in triumph ... having plundered several Churches ... the Surplices upon their own backs, and ... rode publicly into the City.³¹

Instances such as these made Conformist ministers justifiably fearful of finding militants in their congregation. John Watson of Woolpit, according to a local account, had already bore the passing of soldiers in his parish, rifling through his household belongings. When one of the marauders appeared in his church the following Sunday, he was terrified at that pulpit. He tried to

²⁷ Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past & Present*, no. 59 (1973), 51-91.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Bodl., Rawl, D158, fols 43, 48.

³⁰ Further afield in Derbyshire, during a baptism, soldiers were said to have plucked the surplice off the back of Emmanuel Haywood, rector of Barton Blount, stamping on it “as a rag of the whoremaster of Babylon.” Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C5.82.

³¹ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fols. C2.131-2.

excuse himself from preaching, “telling his neighbors that he was under so great a disorder that he could not perform that office.” However, soldiers sometimes liked to get the measure of the clergyman by listening to a sample of their preaching before moving against the cleric. One account held that “a bald soldier made him recite a chapter and pray as God would have enabled him, and he would sit down and hear him himself,” rendering judgement at the end of a sermon.³² Rector Humphrey Jasper, according to his son’s account, was even more daring than Watson in his adherence to Conformity. Jasper openly mocked and taunted Parliamentary soldiers who were listening to his sermon. He preached “that he thought the Devil was in the Parliament in setting in the Kings Throne,” nearly killed by the visiting militia as a result.³³ These episodes represent the core of repressive actions instigated by Westminster throughout Suffolk’s parochial centers. Nonetheless, silencing Conformists was only half the challenge for Cromwell’s regime.³⁴

While such violence was perpetrated on the streets, governmental propaganda was also printed. Both strategies compounded suppression throughout the shire. Acting as a two-pronged attack on Conformity, they accosted Conformists seeking to perform services in their parishes. The Church of England, despite being disestablished, was a constant target of attack in England’s propaganda wars of the Interregnum. The circulation of smear pamphlets and broadsides intensified the already climactic and hostile atmosphere abound during the Interregnum.³⁵ Silencing critics was only half the challenge because the regime also needed to convince the public of its legitimacy. Before 1649, Parliamentary writers had employed the language of mixed

³² Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C1.302.

³³ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fol. C3.379.

³⁴ The motivation for such attacks is perhaps apparent in the memoirs Puritan Lucy Hutchinson, whose husband, the regicide John Hutchinson, was a prominent figure among Parliamentarians. Colonel Hutchinson was in strong opposition of the church, believing that God called him to this service and he remained resolute in the face of danger and the unwarranted accusations of his opponents following the Restoration. See Lucy Hutchinson and Julius Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the life of Colonel Hutchinson, governor of Nottingham castle and town ...: with original anecdotes of many of the most distinguished of his contemporaries, and a summary review of public affairs* (London: Longman, 1806), 140.

³⁵ Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 183-192.

monarchy, not republicanism. This component changed following the execution of Charles, as Parliamentarians seized upon the turbulent times that opened the principles of monarchy to sharper criticism. Throughout the English Revolution, Royalists throughout England also utilized the press to shape and manifest Royalism as a political identity. Opponents to Charles's religious and political policies were the boldest and most innovative in their use of the printing press. As such, there has been much more scholarship on the Parliamentarians than the followers of Charles I.³⁶ The printing press created an avenue for Parliamentarians and Royalists alike to appeal for support. Once Parliamentarians began using the press for propaganda purposes, it created a powerful dynamic that placed Charles I and Conformists on the defensive.

The emergence of pro-Royalist prints suggests Royalists sought to counter the Parliamentarian propagandist strategy with one of their own, thus championing their Conformist beliefs. Print had a larger influential radius in comparison to preaching, and ultimately gave Conformists a voice through mass circulation. Political diatribes, libels, and sensational stories advertised alongside reports on military campaigns and Parliamentary debates. The news was often of varying quality and accuracy, and by the end of the 1640s, "it became increasingly politically polarized."³⁷ In promoting Royalist agendas, polemic pamphlets served as a robust instrument for the Royalist and Conformist cause.

The Commonwealth's champions, in contrast, were defending a constitutional novelty. Parliamentarians also had to counter the devastating blow dealt by *Eikon Basilike*, the anonymous "royal portrait," which had transformed Charles into a Christ-like martyr. An engraving depicted

³⁶ Scholarly examples concerning Parliamentarians include Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (London: Yale University Press, 1997); Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Chris R. Kyle, *Parliaments, Politics and Elections, 1604-1648* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2001); John Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform 1640-1832* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973); David L. Smith, *The Stuart Parliaments 1603-1689* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999).

³⁷ Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7; *Making the News: An Anthology of English Newsbooks* (Moreton-in-Marsh: Windrush Press, 1993), 1-25.

him kneeling in prayer with a crown of thorns, his eyes fixed upon a heavenly crown.³⁸ The text, personified by Charles's voice with pathos, poise, and piety, preserved his integrity and the political and religious principles for which he was committed to lay down his life. *Eikon* had run through thirty-five editions by the end of 1649, and twenty foreign-language editions followed during the Interregnum.³⁹

One crucial aspect distinguishing the employment of propaganda in the 1650s from the previous decade was an active drive to enforce censorship. The decade was influential in the development of ideas about liberty as the temporary collapse of censorship in the early 1640s witnessed an outpouring of political pamphlets. As a provisional measure, in January 1649, the Council ordered the arrest of hawkers selling seditious books, pamphlets, and newspapers, and authorized the Stationers' Company to seize illegal material and arrest the printers.⁴⁰ By 1650, however, the new regime faced deep resentment, and its first goal was therefore to silence opposition voices.

In September, a new licensing act required printers to post strong bonds to issue no unlicensed material and canceled all current newsbook licenses. The Stationers were made responsible for enforcing the new controls, with assistants appointed by the Council. The mayor was to suppress vendors and balladeers, and we soon hear of female vendors being fined and imprisoned.⁴¹ All the previously licensed newspapers had closed by the end of 1649, and all but two of the unlicensed Royalist titles had been silenced. Several new weeklies appeared in Suffolk, closely linked to the government. Walter Frost produced a *Brief Relation*; Henry Scobell fashioned

³⁸ *Eikon Basilike. The Pourtrature of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings* (London, 1649). The author of the tract is still disputed. After the Restoration, John Gauden, Bishop of Worcester, claimed to have penned the tract. Scholars continue to disagree about the merits of this claim. See John Milton, *Eikon Basilike with selections from Eikonklastes*, eds. Jim Daems and Holly Faith Nelson. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2005.

³⁹ Philip A. Nnachel, ed., *Eikon Basilike* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 4-5.

⁴⁰ Jason McElligott, *Royalists and Royalism*, 134.

⁴¹ Frederick Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England 1476-1776* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 245.

Severall Proceedings, John Rushworth published *A Perfect Diurnall*, and *Mercurius Politicus*, the most influential of all, was edited by Marchamont Nedham. The latter received a salary of £100 from the state, as well as half the profits. The proliferation of such newsbooks saturated local news shops, particularly in Ipswich, where avid readers crowded to learn of the national news items.⁴² Together they serve as an insight into how Conformists were treated not on the streets, but in the polemical sphere of print.

In the spring of 1650, through press, pulpit, and magistracy, Westminster strove to educate public opinion in both the meaning and the limits of the new doctrine. Those who refused to disparage the Crown were marked as popish, only igniting further tension at the turn of the decade and inciting violence against Conformists.⁴³ More directly aimed at opinion were the words of Thomas Edgar, a Suffolk Conformist and lawyer, addressing his colleagues a month later. There might be various opinions about the best form of government, Edgar told his fellow justices, but “those in public employment in a Commonwealth must not desert government because the way or form doth not like them. Though one kind of government be better than another, yet take that is next rather than none.”⁴⁴ In another instance, Edgar delivered the charge, at Ipswich that “those in public employment in a commonwealth must not desert government because the way or form doth not like them. Though one kind of government be better than another, yet take that is next rather than none.”

In Edgar’s summation, any government was better than anarchy. However, he disagreed with the restrictions imposed, “upon those with devout sentiments.”⁴⁵ Conformists were intent that regardless of what government reigned, restrictions must be lifted on the Church’s practices.

⁴² Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda During the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (London: Taylor and Francis Ltd., 2017), 161.

⁴³ Hyder E. Rollins, ed. *Cavalier and Puritan. Ballads and Broadside: Illustrating the Period of the Great Rebellion. 1640-1660* (New York: New York University Press, 1923), 48-51.

⁴⁴ Thomas Edgar, *Two Charges delivered by T. E. Esquire, Justice of the Peace for the County of Suffolke* (1650), 7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7-9.

However, as long as a commonwealth backed by Puritan elites, or Independents, were in control, such restrictions would not be released. Instead, they would be tightened. Hence, just as pamphlets and newsbooks were embedded with stinging attacks on Conformists and Royalists alike, printed almanacs also became a vehicle and reminder for suppression. Almanacs would be one of many timely reminders of “forbidden times” when festivities were not allowed.

4.3 Festival Culture

The Commonwealth and Protectorate marshaled zealous magistrates such as John Waterton, along with soldiers, officers, “honest men” and moralists to institute one of the most intensive reform campaigns in England. While Derek Hirst and Christopher Durston have argued that the Puritan goal of “Godly reform” had failed, Bernard Capp’s recent work reconsiders the context in which these “culture wars” were fought in the 1650s.⁴⁶ But Capp’s analysis has focused exclusively on the Puritan cause, one in which the Godly sought to obliterate any and all form of celebrations. Conformists, the main targets of these attempts, were not impassive and countered by continuing to rejoice in the merriment of holy festivals.

When Parliament signed its treaty with Scotland, the Solemn League and Covenant, in September 1643, it sought to reform the Church of England. The removal of saints’ days from the calendar was expected, but the committee went much further. Led by Sir Robert Harley, Parliament attempted to ban colorful festivals like Christmas, Easter, and saints’ days. These holidays’ very human appeal meant, according to Puritans, that they distracted believers from the motions of the

⁴⁶ Derek Hirst, “The Failure of Godly Rule in the English Republic,” *Past and Present*, 132, No. 1 (1991), 33-66; Christopher Durston, “Puritan Rule and the Failure of Cultural Revolution,” in *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560–1700*, ed. Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (London: Palgrave, 1996), 210-33; Bernard Capp, *England’s Culture Wars: Puritan Reformation and Its Enemies in the Interregnum, 1649-1660* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 94-95.

spirit.⁴⁷ The Church calendar too was to take less account of human needs for ritual, striving preferably for an order that would permit the elect to approach the God of the Gospels without distraction. Puritans regarded Christmas not so much as a vice, but an occasion for frivolity. The centerpiece at Christmas gatherings was always the food and drink. Thomas Tusser, the noted English poet and Suffolk farmer, described how festivities included a carnivorous feast of mutton, pork, veal, cheese, and apples.⁴⁸ While he also mentions turkey, imported from nearby Norfolk, he stressed his joy at the excellent bread and tasty drink.⁴⁹ After all, one further way to warm oneself and avoid the winter cold was, of course, vast quantities of alcohol. Alcohol was central to the everyday experience of practically every Englishman and woman. As a daily staple, drink held “nutritional” value and provided energy to England’s industrious sort, and, in particular, to its laborers. Ale and beer selling provided income to struggling families. Drink also softened the experience of harsh winters, personal loss, and poverty. In the taverns, alehouses, and inns of England drink helped to create good fellowship among neighbors, companies, associations, and even distant travelers. At times, it also served as a substitute for the prohibited parochial Church. Conformist John Evelyn, for instance, recorded the sight his fellow local Conformists in Wrentham who unapologetically celebrated the spirit of God in local tavern.

And that nothing may be wanting to the height of luxury and impiety of this Abomination, they have translated the Organs out of the Churches, to set them up in Taverns, chanting their Dithyrambicks, and bestiall Bacchanalias to the tune of those Instruments, which were wont to assist them in the celebration of God’s Praises.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Phese Jensen, “Honest Mirth & Merriment’: Christmas and Catholicism in Early Modern England,” In *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism*, ed. Gallagher Lowell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 213-244.

⁴⁸ Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (1573).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ John Evelyn, *A Character of England, As it was lately presented in a Letter, to a Noble Man of France* (London, 1659), 32-3.

Drink was ubiquitous at celebrations, from the inauguration of a new king to local wedding festivities. As a source of energy, a social lubricant, and a major commodity, then, alcoholic drinks served an unparalleled role in the lives of the English people. As Evelyn remarked,

There is so prodigious a number of houses where they sell a certain drink called Ale, that I think a good half of the Inhabitants may be denominated Ale house keepers: These are a meaner sort of Caberet. They are the gentlemen who sit and spend much of their time drinking in celebration.⁵¹

Wassailing, and the singing of Christmas carols, was always a Conformist favorite pastime throughout the shire.⁵² Often accompanied with a local beverage, often cider, or the spiced beer called lambswool, the ritual involved shared drinking and kissing. Wassailing was also complemented by a slice, or two, of the Twelfth Cake. Consumed at Twelfth Night parties, the religious connotations of the pastry eating were joined alongside with festive eating, drinking, and games not far removed from the Roman Kalends festival. Twelfth Cake contained a dried bean or pea, that if found made the finder a “king” or “queen” for the night, similar to the dinner-party equivalent of the medieval Lord of Misrule.⁵³ While Thomas Tusser died in 1580, long before the Interregnum, his merry poems describing these Christmas pastimes were circulated following the execution of Charles I.⁵⁴ Even Humphrey Mildmay, who sided with Parliament during the Civil War and achieved notoriety for participating in the trial of Charles I, was a fan of the Christian festivities.⁵⁵ While Mildmay spoke of his distaste for both the open hospitality encouraged by Christmas along with the “nasty” December weather, he exhibited his love for food and drink.

⁵¹ John Evelyn, *A Character of England*, 193.

⁵² Angela Nicholls, *Almshouses in Early Modern England: Charitable Housing in the Mixed Economy of Welfare, 1550-1725* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017), 159.

⁵³ Diane Purkiss, *The English Civil War: Papists, Gentlewomen, Soldiers, and Witchfinders in the Birth of Modern Britain* (New York: BasicBooks, 2007), 234.

⁵⁴ Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform, 1626-1660* (London, Duckworth, 1975), 469.

⁵⁵ BL, MS Harleian 454 fol. 50.

Indeed, his affection for cultural celebrations entrenched with Conformist tradition transcended his own political and religious allegiance. He made sure to order in hogsheads of wine, which was soon followed by a long walk to burn off the excesses.⁵⁶

Despite such support for the merriments of the festive calendar, however, the banning of Christmas became paramount to the Cromwellian pursuit of suppression. As the Civil Wars drew to a close, Parliament was overrun with Puritans who believed Christmas was overtly popish. Thus, in 1647, they made celebrating the festival a punishable offense. During the Interregnum, the Cromwellian government went to great lengths attempting to suppress celebrations and enforce the new laws. Ministers who preached on Christmas Day, such as Lionel Gatford of Dennington, were arrested. Gatford, a Royalist Church of England clergyman, responded to Cromwell's order in 1654 that assize judges should see all prayer-book services stifled with a vigorous defense of the old liturgy.⁵⁷ Gatford was leading a furtive existence as an itinerant in East Anglia and employed the Book of Common Prayer whenever circumstances allowed.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Puritans also set about trying to delegitimize Christmas through Scripture, arguing vehemently that Christmas was appropriated from the Roman festival of Saturnalia.⁵⁹ Christmas, like Saturnalia, embodied a season for a certain amount of legitimized disorder. Each year a Lord of Misrule was appointed and given a throne, canopy, armory, jester, and a gibbet replica for hanging those who displeased him.⁶⁰ Puritans maintained that such gaieties reflected the true spirit of Christmas: one of anarchy.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker, fols. C3.

⁵⁸ John Thurloe and Thomas Birch, eds. *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Volume 1, 1638 – 1653*, 7 vols. (London, Fletcher Gyles, 1742), 1:1, 1:707.

⁵⁹ Lionel Gatford, *A Petition for the Publique Use of the Book of Common Prayer* (London, 1654).

⁶⁰ Ronald Hutton, *The Rise, and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year, 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 179.

The banning of Christmas was not just a component of a more comprehensive cultural revolution being implemented throughout the kingdom, but its exclusion was also enacted to implement good neighborliness in society. An equally important ingredient of good neighborliness was conformity to accepted standards of morality and behavior. If the institutional expression of neighborhood ties was the parish, then one critical unofficial reflection of them can be seen in local customs and festivities, many associated with the rural and ecclesiastical calendar. Clearly, these had many functions, not least being an opportunity for pure enjoyment. However, there is undoubtedly more to their value than merely entertainment. The study of popular customs and ceremonies in England by social historians makes it clear that they were sometimes used to enforce orthodox communal values against those who were felt to be deviants.⁶¹ Those felt to be guilty of adultery and other forms of sexual immorality, for example, became the focus of *charivari* or rough music, in which crowds of local people assembled outside the houses of the “deviants” and rang bells, rattled pots and pans and shouted to indicate their disapproval.

The extent to which people risked their wellbeing for the preservation of Christmas was so great that they often risked death for the endurance of the festive period.⁶² Some Conformists publicly revolted against the Christmas ban, including one particular riotous celebration by

⁶¹ Among the scholarship covering the intersection of popular culture and religious culture in early modern England, the following are particularly insightful: David Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace: Idolatry and Commodity Fetishism in English Literature, 1580-1680* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1990); Derek Hirst, *The Representative of the People? Voters and Voting in England under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶² As contemporary newsbooks suggest, most people remained wedded to their festive traditions throughout the country. In this instance, evidence from the period suggests that the celebrations in Suffolk can be extrapolated to areas outside county. One journalist complained that many would pawn all their possessions for Christmas pies, and spent the day “carding, and dicing, drinking, bellowing, roaring.” *The Flying Eagle*, 5 (25 December 1652-1 January 1653), 35-7. Another episode from Northampton in 1650 noted “the great concourse of people this Christmas time,” while a correspondent in Pembroke lamented that despite reformers best efforts and a visitation of plague, “the profaner sort” observed the holiday season “in riotousness and drunkenness.” Though “the Godly party are better principled,” he added, their example had little impact.⁶² *A Perfect Diurnall*, 57 (London, 1651), 763.

Royalists in Ipswich where one reveler was killed.⁶³ Thus, Christmas, as noted by Conformist John Evelyn, was celebrated in secret. For those who failed to keep it secret, Evelyn notes that soldiers arrested a transgressing Suffolk Royalist congregation celebrating Christmas openly. There were indeed illegal Christmas parties and the authorities sought to disband merry conventicles.⁶⁴ However, other Conformists were merely responding to external pressures in the shape of the sacrament. Faced with similar charges in 1650, Laurence Eachard's parishioners defended him from "the worst of losses."⁶⁵ However, their support diminished slightly after threats from his commissary, pushing the reverend to "in some measure conform." Nonetheless, his parishioners continued to affirm that "most of the Godly, be able, and be approved Ministers in the Diocese did the as such."⁶⁶

Yet Puritan objections over alcohol were not based solely on a belief in the evil nature of the beverage. The dangers, they would argue, were that the overconsumptive practices of drink was the malevolent principle. Thus, alcohol in small measure was not evil, but its abuse and indulgence were considered a sin. Central to this fear of promoting too much consumption was the role of the alehouse, the critical site for public recreation in the villages and market towns of Suffolk, and elsewhere. There was a grave concern that people would spend too much on drink and other narcotics, including caffeine, rather than feeding their children and faithfully observing the Sabbath.⁶⁷ Puritans, as such, targeted the alehouses by further asserting these businesses attracted pickpockets, prostitutes, and gaming, often resulting in drunken brawls that disturbed the peace. In addition, the alehouses encouraged Royalist disaffection, providing a location for

⁶³ Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 30.

⁶⁴ Christopher Durston, "Lords of misrule: The Puritan war on Christmas 1642-60," *History Today*, 35 No. 12 (1985), 7-14.

⁶⁵ TNA: SP 22, fol. 3.

⁶⁶ TNA: SP 22, fol. 5.

⁶⁷ Jean Mather, "The Moral Code of the English Civil War and Interregnum," *The Historian* 44, no. 2 (1982), 207-228.

Cavaliers to gather to drink to the King's health.⁶⁸ Sharing a beverage in the alehouse was crucial to the formation of social ties, to the expression of their identity, and to the representation of communities, allegiances, and friendships. As such, the alehouse was an arena in which ordinary folks could generate disorder and voice discontent with the Regime. The Civil War had disrupted alehouse regulation, making the problems endemic and as a result, the Puritans targeted alehouse licenses for reform.

Hence, the Council of State issued orders calling for enforcement of the laws against drunkenness, swearing, and gambling. Frequently such instructions were directed to the customs commissioners and military and naval officers. These men were charged with enforcing the law among their subordinates. Though, far more frequently disorderly alehouses were condemned outright by decree.⁶⁹ Major Nehemiah Bourne, for example, reported to the Navy Commissioners that he had closed several alehouses in Suffolk and Essex after a severe riot and near mutiny by drunken sailors. In another case, a complaint was received about a local tavern, and about excessive drinking and swearing there by both men and women at all hours on Sundays and weekdays.⁷⁰ Thus, the act of engaging in seditious or treasonable talk over a cup of ale or beer also concerned local officials. Such actions against libations were not novel by the advent of the Interregnum. While the degree to which utterances themselves were actionable had shifted over time, the Treason Act of 1649 and subsequent Parliamentary ordinances allowed government officials to prosecute any utterances that "openly" declared that the Protectorate was not the supreme authority of the nation.⁷¹ Given the connection between rumor, seditious speech, and uprisings, Protectorate

⁶⁸ Caroline Boswell, *Disaffection and Everyday Life in Interregnum England* (Martlesham: The Boydell Press, 2017), 3.

⁶⁹ Boswell, *Disaffection and Everyday Life*, 86

⁷⁰ *CSPD*, 1650, 549; 1652-53, 141.

⁷¹ Alan Orr, *Treason and the State: Law, Politics, and Ideology in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18-19.

officials undoubtedly feared that drinking houses could become spaces for subversive meetings and conversations.⁷²

All of these concerns came to a head by 1654, the government demanding of the Britons that Christmas should not be celebrated. After all, the celebrating of Christmas had become an effective way of resisting government mandate. And, indeed many English ignored the rigorous declarations against the holiday. Many parishes in East Anglia, mainly in Suffolk, went on celebrating communion not only on Christmas, but on Easter and Whitsun too.⁷³ It was clear that among the casualties at the Battle of Naseby on 14 June 1645 was Christmas.⁷⁴ The festive period was mourned in a popular ballad, “The World is Turned Upside Down,” to be sung to the tune of “When the King Enjoys His Own Again.”⁷⁵ The Waterpoet, John Taylor, mocked those Puritans for whom, “Plum Pottage was mere Popery, that a collet of brawn was an abomination, that roast beef was anti-Christian, that mince pies were relics of the Whore of Babylon, and a goose or a turkey or capon were marks of the Beast.”⁷⁶ His sneering words record the tentative triumph of those who sought to outlaw the celebrations.⁷⁷

Unsurprisingly, then, Puritans themselves largely ignored Christmas. Bulstrode Whitelocke, an eminent lawyer, reconciled the conflicting demands of piety, social position, and business by retiring to his Chelsea house on Christmas Eve 1651 “with some friends who came to him this time of feasting.”⁷⁸ He continued to attend meetings of the Commons and the Council “as

⁷² David Cressy, *Dangerous talk: scandalous, seditious, and treasonable speech in pre-modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 49-54.

⁷³ Hutton, *The Rise, and Fall of Merry England*, 23-25.

⁷⁴ John Taylor would remark, “To conclude, I’ll tell you news that’s right, Christmas was killed at Naseby fight.” John Taylor, *The Arraignment, Conviction, and Imprisoning of Christmas* (London, 1646), vi.

⁷⁵ *The World is Turned Upside Down* (London, 1640).

⁷⁶ John Taylor, *Christmas In, and Out – Plumb-Pottage was meer Popery*, (London, 1631).

⁷⁷ Hezekiah Woodward, *The schismatical Vicar of Bray, is but one example of an individual who was prone to changing his principles to remain in ecclesiastical office as external requirements pressured him. For Woodward, his attack on Christmas was expounded in his Christ-Mas Day: The Old Heathen’s Feasting Day, in Honour to Saturn, Their Idol-god, the Papists Massing Day, the Prophane Mans Ranting Day* (1656). The attempts to abolish Christmas altogether during the Commonwealth period are summed up in Woodward’s pamphlet.

⁷⁸ Ruth Spalding, ed. *The Diary of Bulstrode Whitelocke, 1605-1675* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 273.

often as he could” over the Christmas period. By 1657, however, Whitelocke had come round to the view that traditionalists should be allowed to worship in peace on Christmas Day, a suggestion that was rejected by Cromwell’s councilors.⁷⁹ Elsewhere, at the universities controlled by Puritans, Christmas was no longer formally observed. At Oxford, Anthony Wood, no Puritan, spent a week with friends at Christmas 1656. Thereafter, he usually remained in college, doing nothing to mark the day. That same year, when Christmas Day fell on the Sabbath, Puritan Ralph Josselin attended to financial business. In 1660, shortly after the Restoration, he felt obliged to preach a sermon on Christmas Day, while noting that some parishioners had stayed away.⁸⁰

The campaign against Christmas thus achieved only one of the reformers’ three main goals. They had succeeded in closing institutions of worship in larger cities such as Ipswich, but not in smaller parishes throughout the county. Most eminent churches now remained closed, which in Puritan eyes marked as noteworthy progress, and Conformist John Taylor lamented that many Christmas traditions survived now only among rural communities in East Anglia. Indeed, in these rustic towns, Conformists had successfully championed Conformist festivities. Most people refused to give up their holiday, and Christmas became a season of greater self-indulgence, “bellows and bag-pipes, taverns and tap-houses having all the custom.”⁸¹ Thus, Christmas in the East Anglian counties at the time offers a striking example to historians of the law of unintended consequences. Condemned by Puritans as profane, Christmas had become even more secular once its religious dimension had been suppressed.

Nonetheless, to suggest that all Puritans were steadfast in the attempt to rid Suffolk of merriment would be incorrect. In some instances, Puritan discipline would not stand in the way of wedding festivities, even under the exigencies of war or during the allegedly austere days of the

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 481.

⁸⁰ *Josselin*, 270, 376, 470.

⁸¹ John Taylor, *Christmas In & Out* (London, 1652), 30.

Cromwellian Protectorate. Most good Christians knew the difference between festivity and excess.

Of his marriage in London, Conformist John Greene writes,

the wedding was kept at my father's house in the Old Jewry very privately, none but brothers and sisters and a friend or two more were at it. My wife expected an ague upon Sunday and Tuesday, and for that reason, it was done on Monday, the Wednesday after being a fast day. On Tuesday, the day after my wedding, we went to the Mermaid in Bread Street to dance and to be merry, where music met us.⁸²

When the Godly Oliver Heywood married the devout Elizabeth Angier in April 1655, they were joined by “a plentiful congregation in the chapel and then feasted above a hundred persons of several ranks, ages and sexes.”⁸³ Ralph Josselin similarly noted with approval that on 15 December 1657, “Mistress Margaret Harlakenden married to Mr. John Eldred, her father kept the wedding three days, with much bounty; it was an action mixed with piety and mirth.” Indeed, for many Puritans, it seemed that the ceremonialism of sermons and fasts had replaced religious festivals and processions. For others, however, entertainment trumped the austerity of the Interregnum.

4.4 Sex, Marriage, and Material Culture

The sacramental rite of marriage in the disestablished Church was also targeted by the Cromwellian regime. In Suffolk, on the eve of the Civil Wars, the Book of Common Prayer dictated the only form of public marriage that was available. In attempting to settle the matter, the Presbyterian authors of the Directory of Public Worship allowed marriage to take place “at any time of the year, except on a day of public humiliation,” and preferably not on the Lord’s day.⁸⁴

⁸² E. M. Symonds, “The Diary of John Greene (1635-57),” *The English Historical Review* 43, no. 171 (1928), 391.

⁸³ Oliver Heywood, *The whole works of ... Oliver Heywood, revised, with memoirs of his life* (London: John Vint, 1827), 63; *A narrative of the holy life, and happy death of that reverend, faithful and zealous man of God* (1685), 63.

⁸⁴ Charles Harding Firth and Robert Sangster Rait, eds. *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642–1660*, 2 vols. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 1:610.

The Directory also relegated its status as a sacrament. Marriage was downplayed as not a peculiar to the Christian Church, but “common to mankind” and of universal public interest. In the newly prescribed ceremony, the form of words spoken by each partner was “I promise and covenant,” and without further ceremony the minister was to pronounce the couple married.⁸⁵

In 1653, the Commonwealth regime instituted secular weddings freeing the ceremony from ecclesiastical ministrations. This was an action that went against deep-seated tradition, a core importance in Conformist communities. Conformist ministers, like John Gauden of Denham objected in his parish that “sanctity” as well as the “civility” of Christian marriage were being undermined. Gauden, and those like him, posited that when they defended marriage as “a thing sacred and to be sanctified” it was notwithstanding the change in the law.⁸⁶ Despite the new implementation of policy, others such as Conformist Robert Henley were presented at the local sessions for marrying couples using the Book of Common Prayer in his home and using the cross at Baptism in 1654.⁸⁷ As aforementioned, the Prayer Book had become a symbol of all that was perceived to be wrong with the Church and was, thus, often torn or defaced. The Prayer Book continued to be used in parishes even after this was made a criminal offense.⁸⁸ One Thomas Earle was indicted at quarter sessions in 1654 for conducting a clandestine marriage using a “prayer book,” while clergyman Thomas Clerk of Ipswich was arrested for reading it in 1655.⁸⁹ That same year, clergyman Michael Noble appeared at the local sessions for continuing to use the Prayer Book to marry people of his Suffolk parish. In 1658, a nearby unidentified minister, hauled before assizes for using, compared the experience of punishment to being “cudgeled.”⁹⁰ Moreover,

⁸⁵ A Directory for Public Worship of God throughout the Three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, *Solemnization of Marriage* (London, 1645).

⁸⁶ John Gauden, *Christ at the Wedding: The Pristine Sanctity and Solemnity of Christian Marriages* (London: 1654).

⁸⁷ TNA, ASSI 45/5, fols. 76-77.

⁸⁸ John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1993), 90-95.

⁸⁹ BL, Add. MSS 39245-46.

⁹⁰ Bodl., Rawl. D 1350, fol. 79.

surviving quarter sessions records show ministers being indicted, and often ejected, for using the compendium. Not long after in 1658, Conformist preacher William Secker would continue the defenses of marriage, opining that “the whole Trinity hath conspired together to set a crown of glory upon the head of matrimony.”⁹¹ The Book of Common Prayer was essential in the act of marriage for Conformists, and both the sacrament and the text faced persecution during the Cromwellian regime.⁹²

Just as Church imagery were a significant source of discomfort for the regime, yokes, knots, and bonds in discussions of matrimony angered the Godly. The familiar image of a yoke was especially powerful, evoking a device that secured harmony and balance between two forces while combining an effort to a common end. Simply stated, “conjugal” relations were those that came together under the yoke of matrimony. For example, Tudor reformer Miles Coverdale understood marriage as “a joining or yoking together, like as two oxen are coupled under one yoke ... but it must also be such a coupling together as cometh from God, and is not contrary to his word and will.”⁹³ By the time of Cromwell, Gouge similarly regarded marriage as a bond, a yoking that dated back to Tudor doctrines. This knitting together, for Conformists in Suffolk and elsewhere, had the couple joined and bound together into a perceived being of one flesh. Each became “a helpmeet” or “yoke fellow” to the other.⁹⁴ Conformist Richard Meggot, preaching in

⁹¹ William Secker, *A Wedding Ring Fit for the Finger: Or, the salve of Divinity On the sore of Humanity* (London:1658).

⁹² Away from Suffolk, the resistance faced by the Cromwellian regime was further exacerbated by the collusion of Puritan ministers. Indeed, participation in private services was not exclusive to the Church’s own laity and clergy. Puritan theologian John Owen, for example, furtively aided and defended those who continued to use the Book of Common Prayer. When biblical scholar, Edward Pocock, was accused of reading the Book of Common Prayer at Childrey, Oxfordshire in 1654, Owen intervened on his behalf, thus saving him from punishment.⁹² Furthermore, Owen attended services of Dr. Thomas Willis when Churchman John Fell read from the Book of Common Prayer. Owen did not object to its use but partook in the service.⁹² These incidents are significant because of Owen's supposed loyalty to the Cromwellian regime. Indeed, collusion between crucial ministers, like Owen, and those who continued to adhere to the Church of England uncovers a socio-religious network that overlooked governmental restrictions and, instead, fostered religious toleration in an increasingly intolerant realm. Robert William Dale, *History of English Congregationalism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 339; John Lavicount Anderdon, *The life of Thomas Ken: bishop of Bath and Wells*, 2 Vols. (London: John Murray Albemarle Street Publishers, 1854), 1:41.

⁹³ Miles Coverdale, *Coverdale, The Christen State of Matrymonye* (London, 1575), A6-A7.

⁹⁴ John Gouge, *Of Domesticall Dvties* (London, 1622), 179, 196.

1655 in Ipswich, asserted that the yoking together of husband and wife secured “a reciprocal and relative interest in each other’s actions.”⁹⁵

Beyond the actual ritual of ceremony or the perception of a married couple’s binding, disputes concerning wedding attire and the grandness of the ceremony also troubled many Puritans. This was not an uncommon occurrence as, throughout the seventeenth century, many accounts draw attention to the bride’s or bridegroom’s costume, or to the wedding guests who wore nuptial knots and ribbons.⁹⁶ Wealthy couples spent lavishly on their nuptial attire, and even the poorest attempted to look their best. New shoes and fresh clothes were considered appropriate wear for a ceremony of new beginnings. Once more, John Gauden wrote similarly on behalf of “comely adorning,” arguing against the austerity of the Interregnum. The Puritanical dictates, according to Gauden, “would seem very grievous to bridegrooms and brides, to be denied the use of their best clothes, their richest ornaments and jewels, which God permits and scripture alludes to.”⁹⁷ Furthermore, Joyce Jeffries’s account books reveal that she spent £20 on a wedding dress for her goddaughter, Elizabeth Acton.⁹⁸ Margaret Harlakenden, a neighbor of clergyman Ralph Josselin, “laid out £120 at London, about wedding clothes, her father being exceeding angry for her vanity.”⁹⁹ This shopping spree took place a month before Margaret’s wedding in 1657. In a similar instance, in 1657, Leonard Wheatcroft would not be denied the accouterments of festivity at his marriage when he equipped the bell ringers with “flying colors tied to the wrist or hand.”¹⁰⁰ Wheatcroft’s guests competed for wedding favors, and wore them as garters or in their hats. The “bride garters” were a much-admired trophy for whoever managed to catch them. Such glamorous

⁹⁵ Richard Meggott, *The Rib Restored: Or. The Honour of Marriage* (London, 1656), 15.

⁹⁶ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 361.

⁹⁷ John Cordy Jeaffreson, *Brides and Bridals* (London: Hurst and Blackett Publishers, 1872), i. 179.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Josselin*, 29.

¹⁰⁰ DRO, D2079.

accessories and general extravagance only support the Puritan belief that the Church of England had not done enough to purify itself of Catholic influences.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, while differences existed between Conformists and Puritans regarding proper behavior, dress, and ceremonialism of marriage, they all agreed on the importance of marriage. Puritan clergyman William Gouge and Conformist Matthew Griffith both dedicated several pages in their respective diaries and sermons regarding their opinion on the marriage, both men agreeing that marriage was the foundation of the family. The purpose of marriage, wrote Gouge, was the “procreation of children that the world might be increased ... with a legitimate brood.”¹⁰² “The end of marriage is issue,” Griffith concurred.¹⁰³ Conformists like Griffith staunchly defended the union, emphasizing its importance in the vitality of local communities under the observance of God. Gouge also endorsed the notion, derived from St. Paul, that marriage was a lawful way to channel sexual energy, especially male sexual energy. In marriage, a man could prevent “inward burning and outward pollution” and “avoid fornication” with Jezebels or harlots.¹⁰⁴ Griffith too agreed that marriage was a way to avoid “uncleanness” and sexual danger, a danger that he went on to describe with unusual taxonomic precision. To point, he argued that, “should it be acted with a married woman, it is called adultery; if with a single woman, it is called fornication; if with one’s cousin, it is called incest; if with either married or single it be done by violence, it is called a rape.”¹⁰⁵

Likewise, one further agreement between the polarized religious factions lay in the belief that marriage should be enacted only in Church.¹⁰⁶ The Church was the ceremonial center of the

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties, eight treatises, etc.* (London, 1622), 22-26.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 182.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 209.

¹⁰⁵ Matthew Griffith, *Bethel, or, A forme for families in which all sorts of both sexes, are soe swarded and framde [sic] by the word, as they may best serue in their seuerall places, for usefull peices in Gods building* (London, 1634), 223.

¹⁰⁶ Christopher Durston, “‘Unhallowed Wedlocks:’ The Regulation of Marriage during the English Revolution,” *The Historical Journal*, 31 (1988), 46.

parish, a place of the public witness as well as religious worship, and the minister was the accepted master of ceremonies. Social, cultural, and legal conventions called for the ceremony to be performed in a church, in view of the bride and bridegroom's kinsfolk, friends, and neighbors. As the Puritan Gouge explained, "a religious consecration of marriage is performed by the blessing of a public minister of the word in the open face of the church in the day time."¹⁰⁷ The church wedding was not just a ceremony, but a lesson.¹⁰⁸ Weddings that took place at nighttime, in clandestine surroundings, in deserted churches or even in private houses, fell short of these ideal conditions. The sanctity and devotional aspect of marriage was paramount concern for all those involved.

One final dispute arising in Suffolk was the issue concerning marriage licenses. The Cromwellian regime took issue with the sale of marriage licenses, and the matter took precedence in the evolving marriage debate throughout the shire. According to Puritan Anthony Gilby, the custom of prohibiting marriage at certain times of the year, and then peddling licenses to facilitate evading the restriction, was another of those "many a point of popery yet remaining, which deformed the English reformation." One David Calderwood, a Presbyterian, would also ridicule the Church of England for,

its forbidden times to marry in, yea, more than the papists have amounting in all to a third part of a year; as if marriage, which is called honorable, did profane these holy times ... Notwithstanding of these forbidden times, they may get a dispensation for some money, and then it shall be lawful enough; for money hath a great virtue in it.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ TNA: SP 16/202/3.

¹⁰⁸ When the Presbyterian John Angier was married "very publicly in Manchester church in the heat of the wars" in the 1640s, the service was marked by no less than two sermons. "Nor was the solemnity in his marriage any fruit of vain glory or ostentation," remarked the Presbyterian's eulogist, "but upon consideration it was his settled judgment and advice that marriage should be publicly solemnized." Oliver Heywood, *The whole works of ... Oliver Heywood, revised, with memoirs of his life* (London: John Vint, 1827), 530.

¹⁰⁹ BL, MS Tanner 50, fol. 41v

The issue of marriage unearths a new dynamic in the grievances of the Church's opponents. Opponents were irritated at the apparent hypocrisy, inconsistency, and greed of the Church in selling licenses to overcome obstacles that had no grounding in scripture or law. Marriage was not entirely forbidden during the designated prohibited periods, but could readily be facilitated by purchasing a license from parochial officials. Observers considered that the calendar regulating marriage had less to do with sacredness and more so to do money.¹¹⁰ The customary prohibition "that from three weeks before Lent till the octaves of Easter, from Advent to Twelfth tide, and for three weeks before midsummer, there shall be no marrying at all, without a dispensation," was, in Conformist James Calphill's opinion, "the mulch cow that yielded so large a meal of spiritual extortion."¹¹¹ Puritans and nonconformists alike continued to berate the Church of England for the peculiarities of its marriage calendar following the Restoration of Charles II.

4.5 Conclusion

During the Interregnum, Suffolk was home to Conformists who both formulated and fostered a set of shared communal values that helped sustain traditional Church of England beliefs. True, the motivation behind such fostering was in response to legislation directed from the Commonwealth regime on the national level rather than originating from new concepts. Nonetheless, the opponents of the disestablished Church utilized various strategies, from prohibiting the sacraments to the closing of alehouses to altering the festive calendar, in an attempt make Conformists submit to the new regime. The effects of national policies tricked down to local villages and town in Suffolk. Conformist opponents, both Puritans and nonconformists alike,

¹¹⁰ Richard Adair, *Courtship, illegitimacy and marriage in early modern England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 162.

¹¹¹ Richard Giddings, ed. *James Calphill, An Answer to John Martiall's Treatise of the Cross* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 241.

maneuvered through the public sphere utilizing propaganda. In addition to this polemical warfare circulated on the street, opponents of the disestablished Church also used physical force in local parishes to destroy any surviving Popish remnants. Parliamentary ordinances attempted to eradicate Christian festivals to quash morale in the Conformist community. Conformists not just continued to revel in festivities, but among the cake and alcohol, overlooked possible fines or imprisonment in order to celebrate their faith. Likewise, matrimonial celebration persevered, albeit under more complicated measures. As the anecdotes from Suffolk portray, marriage continued to be both a ritual process of transformation and an enduring state of affairs. In their seeking for toleration and religious expression, Conformists preserved because of their reliance amongst one another, both in the east counties and elsewhere across England.

CHAPTER 5. ESSEX

In 1655, Conformist clergyman Daniel Barfoote stood before his local court accused of violating the Rump Parliament's statute regarding sexual deviance. The record held that,

Daniel Barfoote of Cressing clerk, was and is by the space of 10 years last past a minister, and preacher of God's most holy word, and hath been and now is an honest man of good name from the time of his birth, and hath always behaved and carried himself as an honest, pious, Godly and religious person without any crime of adultery, incest and fornication. Nevertheless Arthur Cowland of Chatley Hamlett in Great Leighs, laborer, knowing of the premises but going about maliciously intending not only to deprive Barfoote of his good name, but to bring him into danger of the penal statute lately made for the suppressing of the detestable sins of incest and adultery and fornication[,] at Crossing, falsely scandalously, opprobriously and maliciously in the presence and hearing of divers honest and credible persons, did speak of Barfoote these false and scandalous words, 'Young Barfoote was [now] with the widow Marsh (meaning Dorcas Marsh of Cressing, widow) and she is his whore.'¹

The Essex court record also lists one Arthur Cowland as the accuser, noting that he believed Barfoote to be in breach of the statute and of immoral character. As Cowland approached the court, he withdrew his words, "putting himself in the favor of the court," and paid a fine of five shillings. The slanderous lies were motivated, in part, by an attempt to displace the minister from his duties to the parish of Henham. When considered in the context of Essex's Interregnum, such disparagement was driven by the intense aversion of the local Conformist leaders.

As the court record indicates, attacks on the clergy became a somewhat common occurrence in Essex as well as elsewhere. In this particular instance, an accuser was not only criticizing and speaking poorly of a Conformist minister, but actively trying to have that minister prosecuted without sufficient evidence. It is an egregious example of how respect for the authority of the clergy had diminished. Some reduction in the status of the clergy would have been expected, as aforementioned, because challenging the legitimacy of the traditional ecclesiastical authorities

¹ ERO, Q/SR 364/12.

was a principal aim of the Long Parliament. In the eyes of Puritans, belief might have become free for tender consciences, but as court documents suggests, open debate or the shouting down of ministers was subject to penalty.²

Essex has always been one of the most influential counties in England, a model extrapolatable to elsewhere in England.³ Bordered by London to the southwest, Essex was a type of annex to the City.⁴ Thus, the county was awash with clashes between the disestablished Church and its opponents fleeing the government in Westminster for the influential peoples of the City outskirts. However, Essex was also unique, in some regards, from the other east counties and wider England. Cambridgeshire was entrenched in battles emanating from the pulpit and in the pew because of the influential University of Cambridge. Norfolk boasted a strong economic presence and gentry in the region. Even Suffolk displayed a strong Royalist presence, often entertaining disputes through the press. Yet it was Essex where fortifications existed, both literally and figuratively, for Cromwell's major-generals. Populated by New Model Army troops, the county was starkly contrasted with its demographics a decade prior. Indeed, a local report issued on 24 June 1643 stated,

the inhabitants of the County of Essex, are raising more men to send to his Excellency the Parliaments Lord General, to reinforce his Army, and they are so willing to testify their readiness to fight for the King and Parliament, that some Townes there send forty. men, thirty others, and some twenty, and small villages afford ten men a piece for this service, and those forces intend to take six weeks' pay in their pockets to sustain themselves, because they will not be burdensome to the Parliament, nor the City of London and they are so desirous to free the king from the bondage and slavery of evil Councilors and Cavaliers, that they are fully resolved to adventure their lives in the prosecution of those intents.⁵

² Ibid.

³ Essex proceedings relating to clerical ejections are located in Leicester University Library MS 31 and BL, MS 5829. J. Sharpe, "Scandalous and malignant priests in Essex: the impact of grassroots Puritanism," in *Politics and People in Revolutionary England*, eds. C. Jones, M. Newitt, S. Roberts (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 253-73.

⁴ Raymond H. Parry and Robert Ashton. *The English Civil War and After, 1642-1658* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 13-14.

⁵ William Ingler, *Certain Informations from Severall Parts of the Kingdome for the Satisfaction of All Sorts of People That Desire to Bee Truly Informed* (London, 1643), 24 June 1643.

However, this was not to say that elements of conformity did not exist in the face of such clear numerical superiority. In truth, the character of Essex was one ridden with Conformist preservation.⁶

This chapter will analyze these Conformists in Essex and how they navigated political and religious oppression by defending the sacraments of baptism and communion.⁷ Together, both sacraments were preserved as the only two post-Reformation sacraments in the Protestant Church of England. Even amid the revolution, Conformists were ardent in their efforts in persisting with these rites of the disestablished Church. Tellingly, then, an examination of how clerical reputation was a vulnerable, assailable asset of the Conformist community needs to be explored. Rumor or claims made in court easily damaged a clergyman's character. This was compounded by the increasing pressure brought on by the Protector, the Council of State, and Godly officers of the New Model Army, all of whom tried to promote moral reformation in Essex. Rather than constituting a new push toward religious reform of the county, the program was more of an attempt to pursue political stability through the suppression of disorder. In the eyes of Cromwell, he believed this disorder laid with the Conformists the country. While the case of Daniel Barfoote is an example of how the strategies of opponents of the disestablished Church failed, other examples can also demonstrate how defamation and accusations were utilized to disassemble conformity. Summarily, Conformist preachers and their teachings in Essex reveal the distinctive character of

⁶ For discussion on the construction of contrasting royalist and parliamentarian confessional politics in Essex before the Civil War in the Seventeenth century, see John Walter, "Confessional Politics in Pre-Civil War Essex: Prayer Books, Profanations, and Petitions.: *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 3 (2001), 677-701.

⁷ In addition to the doctrinal disputes involving Hooker's interpretation of the Eucharist, Puritans during the Interregnum grew frustrated with the Laudian explication of the sacrament. Puritan clergymen were frustrated with both the popish elements associated with Laudianism and its inherent contradiction with the Calvinistic view of the communion. Conformists separated their own views of the Eucharist from their Puritan counterparts by distinguishing the main differences in both Laudian and Calvinistic views on communion. So far from believing communion was only a "symbol," Calvin had written that "Christ offers himself in the Supper with all his goods, and we receive by faith." However, though Laud took a relatively high view of what the Reformer had meant by a "spiritual presence," he drew the line at the corporal transformation. William Conrad Costin, *History of St John's College* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 27; William Scott, ed. *The works of the Most Reverend Father in God, William Laud, D.D., sometime Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, vol. IV (Oxford : J. H. Parker, 1847-1860), 4: 201.

conformity in that county. A study of these actors uncovers an enthusiastic intellectual undercurrent, spearheaded by displaced Conformist academics active throughout Essex during the Interregnum. In essence, where most local authorities had submitted to the new regime with reluctance, anxious primarily to protect their autonomy and economic interests, Conformists remained unreceptive and determined to uphold conformity in their shire.

5.1 Contextualizing Essex's Conformists

By the time of the Interregnum, the western part of Essex became one of the first London suburbs, and many of the commercial elite had homes or estates there. Unsurprisingly, then, the Earl of Essex was traditionally one of the most powerful Lords in the country, and he led Parliament's forces during the early years of the First Civil War.⁸ Moreover, Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, who was the most critical and influential patron of Oliver Cromwell, not only had significant holdings in the county but was also listed as the primary lord on the assizes during the Interregnum. Various other essential persons during the period were from Essex, such as Republican firebrand Sir Henry Vane and the regicide Henry Mildmay.⁹ Thus, it was tempting for Puritan ministers to focus on compatible "tender souls" and overlook the rest in the environs of the community.

The county was prosperous and populous, counting some 100,000 to 120,000 residents in the seventeenth century. The agricultural areas of the county produced mainly wheat and livestock, much of which went to provisioning the capital, its agriculture geared mainly toward the lucrative London food market.¹⁰ Colchester, in particular, was a prosperous agricultural area, essential to

⁸ James E. Farnell, "The Aristocracy and Leadership of Parliament in the English Civil Wars," *The Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 1 (1972), 79-86.

⁹ Valerie Pearl, "Oliver St. John and the 'Middle Group' in the Long Parliament: August 1643-May 1644," *The English Historical Review* 81, no. 320 (1966), 494-495.

¹⁰ J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in Seventeenth-Century England: A County Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 15.

textile production. Founded by the Romans and numbering 10,000 residents, the town was also the site of an eleventh-century Norman castle that contained the county's jail harboring militants of the period. County administration, however, was conducted in nearby Chelmsford, chosen for its central location and road infrastructure.¹¹ Situated on the Great Essex Road, Londoners could easily reach the rest of East Anglia and the coast.¹²

It follows, then, with its location and demographics of powerful elites that Essex was “first for Parliament.”¹³ The county was a significant source of financial support and troops during the Civil War, and it had long been known as strongly Puritan.¹⁴ Yet, despite its long-standing support for Parliament, much of the county vigorously contested the presence of the major-generals. Analyzing the religious and cultural conditions in Essex and the effects of the major-generals on that historically pro-Parliament and pro-Puritan county, a locality one might expect to have supported their presence, and any Puritanizing measures shed light on the context in which Conformity persevered. Indeed, the religious character of Essex during the English Revolution is best reflected in the events on 20 January 1642. After Buckinghamshire, Essex was the second English shire to respond to the situation at Westminster involving the King's abortive attempt to seize the Five Members earlier that month.¹⁵ On 20 January, petitions from the county to the Lords and the Commons, each with a massive roll of signatures attached, and a petition from Colchester

¹¹ Lawrence R. Poos, “The Rural Population of Essex in the Later Middle Ages.” *The Economic History Review* 38, no. 4 (1985), 515-30.

¹² Alfred Kingston, *East Anglia and the Civil War* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), 243-262.

¹³ Hunt, x.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵ “The Five Members” refers to those five Members of Parliament whom King Charles I attempted to arrest when he, accompanied by armed soldiers, entered the English House of Commons on 4 January 1642, during the sitting of the Long Parliament. The five members were John Hampden, Arthur Haselrig, Denzil Holles, John Pym, and William Strode. The King believed that Puritans, encouraged by these Members of the House of Commons, together with the peer Edward Montagu, Viscount Mandeville (the future Earl of Manchester), had encouraged the Scots to invade England in the recent Bishops' Wars, and that they were intent on turning the London mob against him. The attempt to impeach the five men, along with the Bishops War in Scotland 1639 and the outbreak of the Irish Civil War in October 1641, is regarded as the catalysts for the Civil War, the beheading of the king, and the eventual rule of Oliver Cromwell. Clive Holmes, *Why was Charles I Executed?* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2007), 45-55.

to the lower House, were presented.¹⁶ In all three, the petitioners thanked Parliament for their previous endeavors “for the settling of Church and State,” and pushed for the implementation of those policies supported by John Pym and his allies in the Commons.¹⁷ These included that Roman Catholic peers and Bishops be excluded from the Lords, that the Kingdom be put in a “posture of defense.” The swift collection of the vast numbers of signatures to these petitions were undertaken at the village level by Puritan ministers.¹⁸ They serve, then, as further indication of Essex as a strong Puritan, anti-Conformist, leaning county.

The Civil War committees for scandalous and plundered ministers sequestered six Colchester incumbents: Cock at St. Giles’s, Jarvis at Greenstead, Nettles at Lexden, Honifold at St. Mary Magdalen’s, Newcomen at Holy Trinity, and Goffe at St. Leonard’s. Conformist Thomas Eyres was stripped of Great Horkesley but allowed to keep Mile End.¹⁹ Under Presbyterian organization, the town constituted one of the four sub-divisions of Thurstable classis, but only three ministers, from 1648, are known: Robert Harmer, the town pastor, James Wyersdale at Lexden, Alexander Piggot at St. Leonard’s.²⁰ There was by then little support for Presbyterianism among the townspeople, who preferred the Independent congregational churches. Even incumbents not sequestered by Parliament received rough treatment. For example, in 1650 there were tumults all day in Lexden’s church when a group of Conformists sang all one-hundred and seventy-six verses of Psalm 119 to prevent the Presbyterian minister Wyersdale from preaching.²¹ To ensure frequent sermons, the town authorities also acquired ministers such as Ralph Josselin, rector of Earls Colne, who preached in 1646, 1650, and 1652. A plan of 1650 to reduce the number

¹⁶ Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, 1550-1640* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 70.

¹⁷ Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 25.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26 – 27.

¹⁹ Harold Smith, *The Ecclesiastical History of Essex under the Long Parliament and Commonwealth* (Colchester: Benham and Co., 1931), 21-22.

²⁰ *Division of Essex into Classes* (London, 1648), 21

²¹ E.R.O., D/B 5 SB2/9, ff. 7v.-8

of parishes in the town from twelve to four, each with a preaching minister, was discarded by 1660.²²

Clearly, Essex's Interregnum years were similar in tone to its Civil War period. Albeit one main difference existed in the shape of swelling sectarian groups which heightened fears of radical thought and disorder. These fears were part of then contemporary millennial cosmology, which was strongly believed in by army radicals such as the Fifth-Monarchists, but also affected more moderate Puritans as well. Indeed, religious radicals visited the town with some frequency, espousing millennialism fervently. Lawrence Clarkson, the Baptist seeker, came in the late 1640s; the Quaker James Parnell in 1650, 1652, and 1655; and the Baptist Thomas Tillam, as well as the Fifth Monarchist Henry Jessey, in 1655.²³ These men advocated a belief that the Devil, in the guise of the Pope, had designs to take over all of England and the world. Accordingly, resisting these efforts was not only the English's pragmatic and patriotic duty, it was their mission and commission from God Himself. Such thought found a welcome home in Essex. Worrying about news from Europe and fearing the end of the world, Ralph Josselin consoled himself that even if the Popish forces took the nation, it at least meant the second coming of Christ. Fretting in his diary about those events, he consoled himself, "I had an apprehension I might be reserved to see the world turned into a wilderness, and Christ's coming and this I eyed as a mercy."²⁴ He certainly did not want Satan to reign supreme, but he had hoped that the rapture would follow such a temporal defeat. A cold comfort in troubled times. Nevertheless, it was against the background of these threats, problems, and setbacks that the Essex Conformists contemplated their attempted measures at preventing the further dismantling of their beloved Church.

²² E.R.O., D/B 5 GB4, ff. 174, 213, 218.

²³ William Cliftlands, *The "Well-Affected" and the "Country:" Politics and Religion in English Provincial Society, 1640 - 1654* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Essex University, 1987), 225.

²⁴ Ralph Josselin, *Diary*, 71.

5.2 Contested Sacraments

Together, and as briefly explored in chapter three, the sacraments of baptism and communion were preserved as the only two post-Reformation sacraments in the Church of England. Such enshrinement of these sacraments is a testimony to their central position in the foundations of Christian life. Yet, baptism was held as the sacrament of fundamental importance. Both the individual recipient and the community at large were supposed to profit through participation in the baptismal act.²⁵ Hence, it operated, like most rites of passage, in both public and private dimensions. The ceremony signified the covenant between Christ and his people and entered the newborn child into the congregation of the Christian faithful. As a solemn ceremony of the Church, baptism was seen as having opened the doors to the kingdom of heaven and bestowing the badge of membership in the universal body of Christ.²⁶

Yet, despite the clear power baptism, and secondarily communion, had in the community, they remained disputed throughout Essex's Interregnum. Both rites formed the basis of deep tensions and divisions in the parish. For some Sectarians, baptism of the adult believer was valid, of anyone else a heretical notion.²⁷ The Quakers went further, rejecting baptism and communion altogether as empty forms, finding the rites as quaint and superstitious. For most Puritan ministers, and the population at large, the sacraments raised very different issues. Some English no longer bothered to have their infants baptized, knowing they now faced no risk of prosecution.²⁸ However, far more problematic was the issue of access to the baptismal. As one anonymous minister of Rochford remarked on the barriers presented to his flock, "the great bone of contention in the

²⁵ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 173-174.

²⁶ Charles Miller, *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God: Exploring the Origins of Anglicanism* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2013), 140-154.

²⁷ Christopher Durston, *The Family in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 116-21

²⁸ John Collinges, *Provocator provocatus. Or, An answer made to an open challenge made by one M. Boatman in Peters Parish in Norwich* (London, 1654), sig. A4.

Church of God of this day” was restriction of baptism.²⁹ Most people felt it their right to have their children baptized and to receive communion. Puritans disagreed. Indeed, Puritan ministers believed they should refuse to baptize the children of the ignorant and profane, hotly debating the issue with theologians and clerics at the time.³⁰ Some, like Thomas Wilson of Maldon would only baptize infants whose parents had been examined and admitted to communion. Such a policy was adopted by several parishes in the shire. Nevertheless, the new *modus operandi* bred great resentment. Independents, for example, refused to baptize any child whose parents were not in covenanted church-fellowship.³¹ Moderates feared that such an approach would drive people away, and others warned it might even drive the English into popery.³²

Even before the outbreak of war in August 1642, there were increasing reports of desecrations, repudiation of Laudian practice, and of parishioners taking control of the liturgy in Essex, as well as in Suffolk mentioned above. Several fonts throughout East Anglia fell under the hammer in 1641 and 1642. As the authority of the established Church unraveled during the opening years of the Long Parliament, incidents involving Puritans interrupting sermons began to take hold of Essex county. For example, after the burial of a widow on 24 March, when six women,

coming impudently upon the Curate, as he was passing from the Grave, laid violent hands on him, drew their knives, and near his throat cut and rent off his Surplice and Hood in most barbarous manner, before ye whole Congregation, so carried away their spoils, triumphing in their victory.³³

With such iconoclasms and desecrations, changes in religious belief and alterations of ecclesiastical organization also required changes in liturgical practice. Fonts became officially redundant after 1645, to be replaced by portable basins in Essex and elsewhere. Yet, these fonts

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ BL, Add. MS 70,007, f.137.

³¹ Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters Volume I: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 154 – 5.

³² Geoffrey Nuttall, *Richard Baxter* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1965), 55-9.

³³ ERO, D/P 22/1/9, fols. 18v.

were not as severely impaired as has sometimes been suggested. After all, it was not necessary to deface or remove the font to meet the new liturgical arrangements. Indeed, simple neglect would suffice. Medieval fonts were often massive pieces of masonry, hard to damage and expensive to move, making ignoring the care of them the easiest means to rectify the heresy apparent to Puritans. Fortunately, then, most survived unscathed and after 1660 could again be used as they were intended.³⁴

All of these unfolding events in Essex underpin the necessity of moving the sacrament of baptism from public parochial churches to private places of worship. Foremost among Conformist followers to adhere to the older rituals was the diarist, John Evelyn. Upon leaving his home Essex in November 1643, he embarked on the Gran Turismo of France and Italy for the next three years before returning back to his county. A staunch and devout adherent to the Church of England, he found a spiritual advisor in renowned cleric Jeremy Taylor, bringing his reinforced spiritual convictions and theological constraints back to England in 1647.³⁵ By the close of the decade, his once youthful exuberance was spent, his life taking a darker turn. The regicide in 1649 was, for him, a particularly painful day that he never forgot or forgave. His resentment toward the Cromwellian regime would grow in the next several years as the deaths of three of his eight young children in the 1650s embittered the man, the restitution and relief he sought in the Church as it had become was neither fulfilling or nor comforting. Nevertheless, like his fellow Conformists, Evelyn sought to preserve his religion.³⁶

Evelyn kept his religion alive through the private patronage of suspended ministers and private use of the Book of Common Prayer.³⁷ His home in nearby Sayes Court, Deptford, was a

³⁴ Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908), 275.

³⁵ BL, MSS Tanner 52, fols. 101, 216; MSS Tanner 58, fol. 468.

³⁶ Gillian Darley, ed. *John Evelyn: Living for Ingenuity* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007), 258-260.

³⁷ Judith D. Maltby, *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (London: Cambridge, 2000), 7.

model of how the Church of England's practices were preserved and sustained throughout the 1650s despite Parliamentary injunctions. Its close proximity to Essex attracted travelling Conformists such as Matthew Newcomen of Dedham and Stephen Marshall of Ashen.³⁸ Moreover, it was close to the town of Brentwood, a settlement noted for its strong Puritan sympathies.³⁹ Baptism and private devotional services were regular occurrences on Evelyn's one hundred-acre estate. The manor itself provided a refuge from Presbyterianism or Independency, an alternative liturgical venue to the parish Church, preserving the older sacraments of baptism and communion, the Church of his youth and refuge in the darker times of his life.⁴⁰ Evelyn, himself, served as godfather at several baptisms in 1648, 1649, and 1658, all conducted as close as possible to the suspended usage of the Church of England. Yet, his strength, as noted was greatly influenced by Taylor during his time abroad. And, indeed, it was Taylor whom seems to be the backbone to the diarist's deepest convictions.⁴¹

Yet, Taylor's life, unlike Evelyn's, was ridden with abject poverty throughout the Interregnum. He depended on the generosity of Conformist sympathizers and patrons, some of whom had fallen on challenging times themselves, unable to support another mouth beyond their own kin. Nonetheless, this did not dissuade his absolute dedication to the repressed Church.⁴² Expectedly, Taylor assisted Evelyn in his private Church services. Taylor would also be called upon by several others, emerging as leading Conformist in the parish. For example, Brian Duppa, the deprived bishop of Salisbury, often called on the itinerant preacher for advice.⁴³ Overwhelmingly, though, the importance of Taylor lies beyond his influence on Evelyn. When Taylor was not attending private services, he dedicated his time to writing. His sermons and

³⁸ MSS Tanner 58, fol. 468

³⁹ E.R.O., D/DTw F9.

⁴⁰ Darley, *John Evelyn: Living for Ingenuity*, 120.

⁴¹ BL, Add. 15948, 15950.

⁴² BL, Add. 4274, fols. 140, 142; Add. MS 29851, fol. 5.

⁴³ Edmund Gosse, *English Men of Letters: Jeremy Taylor* (London: Macmillan Press, 1903), 37.

writings, supported predominately through the occasional patronage of Richard Vaughan, Second Earl of Carbery, offer insights into how notable religious writers, like himself, preserved their religiosity in literary form.⁴⁴ For example, Taylor spent the next year or two diligently preaching throughout East Anglia, England and preparing two volumes of sermons, “for all the Sundays of the year,” which were published as *Eniautos* in 1651 and 1653.⁴⁵ In March 1655, Taylor traveled to London where he also preached at St. Gregory church by St. Paul’s cathedral. During this trip, he delivered the manuscript of *Unum Necessarium*, in which he argued for the importance of repentance, to Richard Royston a fellow Church Preservationist who printed most of Taylor's works.⁴⁶ Following his incarceration in Chepstow Castle between May and October 1655, he traveled once again to Essex where he continued to preach, to write, and to offer spiritual guidance and moral support to his fellow Conformists.

Perhaps the most profound consequence of the midcentury disruptions, in this regard, was to license a wide variety of practices unhindered by ecclesiastical discipline. Essential elements of the baptismal ceremony were preserved by Conformists aided by a robust social network like the one fashioned by Evelyn. Though performed by a minister and recorded in the register, baptism was increasingly conducted in private, removed from public scrutiny, and physically separated from the church. John Beadle, an Essex minister, may have spoken for many of his brethren when he complained in 1656 that, “despite the eradication of offensive ceremony, many “care not whether their infants be admitted into the church by that sacrament or not.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Thomas K. Carroll, *Wisdom and Wasteland: Jeremy Taylor in His Prose and Preaching Today* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 113. The Interregnum proved a fruitful decade for Taylor’s productivity. At the onset of the 1650s, he published *The Great Exemplar* (London, 1649), *Holy Living* (London, 1650), and *Holy Dying* (London, 1651), the latter dedicated to Carbery.

⁴⁵ Jeremy Taylor, *Dekas Embolimaos a Supplement to the Eniautos* (London, 1653), b.

⁴⁶ Gosse, *English Men of Letters*, 37.

⁴⁷ John Beadle, *The Journall or Diary of a Thankfull Christian* (London, 1656), 45.

Communion, more than baptism, created even deeper tensions.⁴⁸ Though, such strife had origins in the preceding century. As early as 1589, in one egregious example, the archdeacon of Essex faced defiant radicalism when he learned that a maidservant of the Puritan Quarles family had been buried at Romford. The archdeacon took issue, noting that “without any ceremony, and not according to the communion book” the interment had been performed. Clustered around the open grave, one of the diggers asked, “who should bury her,” to which John Leech replied, “all we here present.”⁴⁹ Leech, a nonconformist schoolmaster and a constant thorn in the side of the authorities, conducted a makeshift burial service of his own and “threw the earth on her and covered her” himself, an action that led to his later excommunication. Such transgressions would continue to occur in Essex. Nearly twenty years later, in 1607, William Bird was,

much complained upon for burying the dead, being a mere lay man ... he hath buried many dead bodies in the parish of Coggeshall but hath not read the form of burial outlined in the Book of Common Prayer, neither was there any minister present.⁵⁰

Bird’s offense was equally deeply troubling to the ecclesiastical authorities, but it was not one they had to deal with on a frequent basis until the Interregnum.

As the Civil Wars approached, Conformist opponents argued that in both communion and church, membership should be confined to the elect. Resultantly, many broke away from the establishment to form separatist churches that grew into the Congregationalist and Baptist movements. Mainstream Puritans remained committed to a national Church, often insisting on a strict test to exclude the ignorant and unworthy. Exclusion was now the strongest disciplinary

⁴⁸ By the time of Cromwell’s administration, Essex and its disagreements over communion had come to a head. Conformist understanding of the rite of communion in Essex was best encapsulated by the writings of Richard Hooker. Hooker, often cited by Essex parishioners, commended fasting communion and private confession before a priest as God’s appointed officer. The theologian also taught more along the lines of a pneumatic presence of Christ.

⁴⁹ ERO D/AEA 14, fol. 84v.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

sanction the clergy possessed, and many were determined to use it to best advantage. Most lay folk, by contrast, regarded communion as their right and resented the prospect of a potentially humiliating examination. The clergy was there to serve, not rule them. This vexed issue triggered fierce public debate and bred friction in many communities. A troubled Essex rector, Oliver Bromskel, wrote in 1652, “I examine as many as I can but not all; keep off as many public scandalous ones as I can, yet satisfy not myself nor some others. Yet I dare not omit that ordinance.”⁵¹ Most clergies saw that as their duty. The problem was the mass of followers whose lives appeared outwardly respectable. While moderates would admit such people, Independents, and the stricter Presbyterians demanded a rigorous examination of each individual’s faith. When Abraham Pinchbecke moved to Essex in 1654, he judged not one of his new parishioners fit to receive the Lord’s Supper.⁵²

Many Puritan ministers settled on a pattern of regular communions every month or six weeks. Many others, however, effectively abandoned the sacrament, knowing they would face criticism whatever position they adopted. The eminent Puritan Stephen Marshall, appointed chaplain of the Earl of Essex’s regiment, was one of many conscious that theological and pastoral considerations pulled in opposite directions. Marshall felt uneasy about the compromise he had adopted, baptizing all infants while excluding over half the parish from communion. By 1651, he escaped the dilemma by leaving his Essex parish to become town lecturer at nearby Ipswich in Suffolk. His new position carried no pastoral responsibilities, and a colleague remarked enviously that “he is now out of the snare.”⁵³

⁵¹ Baxter, *Correspondence*, i.79 – 80.

⁵² *Ibid.*, i.137.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, i.149–50, 208.

5.3 Clerical Reputation at Stake

Conformists faced many other problems beyond disputed sacraments in Essex and East Anglia. Ministers who had reluctantly conformed to the new order were unlikely to prove zealous reformers. While some clergymen had been ejected as scandalous or malignant, and had subsequently found another living, usually less well-paid, others had continued to lecture to parishioners some form of order. For their part, Puritan ministers sometimes had to fight prolonged battles against their predecessors who refused to accept dismissal or surrender their income. These Puritans might also face opposition from parishioners angry at the suppression of Prayer Book services and traditional festivals. Anti-clericalism, then, had reached a level hitherto unknown, and tithes proved hard to collect across East Anglia. Aggravating these issues further was the very real tensions between the needs of the Godly and those of the majority. It was tempting for Puritan ministers to focus on like-minded “tender souls,” and overlook the rest. John Warren of Ashdon pleaded with his colleagues not to abandon the worldly. He warned, “Beware ye cast them not out of your care as trash and trumpery not worth the looking after it is a failing too incident to Godly ministers.”⁵⁴ Nonetheless, his ministrations fell on deaf ears.

That a Conformist cleric’s reputation was vulnerable asset during this time is apparent. One’s moral status, like Warren’s, was easily damaged by slander and false accusation at the best of times, and was rendered exceptionally fragile during the Interregnum. Particularly if one was not conforming to the Cromwellian Church. Such was the case with William Frost, clergyman in the parish of Hutton, who in December 1635 was acquitted by the High Commission for speaking ill of Puritans to his parishioners. However, eight years later, he found himself again facing the same charges when several women denounced him before the Essex County Committee on

⁵⁴ John Warren, *The unprofitable servant: a sermon preached at the assize holden at Chelmsford for the county of Essex, March 26* (London, 1655), 9-11.

multiple counts of sexual harassment.⁵⁵ The central allegation of the chief accuser, Margaret Wall, was that “he had lately kept company with a woman of a light Carriage, and kept a whore of one Anne Howell in his House for many years.”⁵⁶ While this action in itself was likely misinterpreted, Frost’s attempts to preserve the Church as he knew it surely provided ample tinder for those seeking to pillory him. In a surviving minute book of the High Commission, the “whore” he was accused of purchasing, was in fact his sister-in-law. That Howell had given birth to a bastard child called Hanna about the time of Frost’s marriage was well-known in the county. Indeed,

for seven years, they said Hanna was brought upon in Mr. Frosts house, and did usually call Mr. Frost Father. That the common fame about Middleton was that they said Hanna was begotten by Mr. Frost on the body of Ann Howell.⁵⁷

Nonetheless, as Frost had transgressed against the Godly sort in his ministry and cavorted with the “sinful” of society, his reputation as a respected member of society fell into question. Before the High Commission, Frost was further accused of fathering two more bastards, one more by Anne Howell, another by a servant. Frost hardly helped his case, attempting to suborn the churchwardens,

Mr. Frost told them that there was a fame raised betwixt him and his maid ... and ... he would pull it down ... pulling out a box shewing them certain writing one said that he had put them into the High Commission Court and the Low Courte and wished them to ... speaker nothing of it until the next visit and he would have them harmless though it cost him an hundred pounds.⁵⁸

Yet, it is just as likely that it was the act of bringing into the clerical household a family member of debased reputation, and bringing up a bastard child as his own, that lead to an intense scrutiny being placed on his actions. His poor reputation developed through gossip and hearsay from a single affront to local sensibilities. Such a case, moreover, is indicative of the lengths the

⁵⁵ BL, Add. 5829, fols 31, 33.

⁵⁶ TNA, SP 16/261, fol. 291.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Puritans would go to discredit those seeking preservation. Unsurprisingly, during the Cromwellian age, Frost was ejected from his ministry, another victim of zealotry.

Actions against the clergy often were often strategized by Puritans, with various underlying motives like financial disputes, religious difference, and personal grudges. Indeed, beyond personal behavior and assorting with “whores” like Frost, Conformist Dr. Edward Essex was smeared instead for his collection of Church idols. As Layfield preserved his cherished religious ornaments in the face of intense local Puritan criticism, he accused opponents with sacrilege when they sought to have his golden letters and images removed.⁵⁹ Similarly, Robert Snell, a local vicar, blocked efforts to remove a crucifix in the window over the altar when Parliament ordered the image to be removed.⁶⁰ Both men were also brought before tribunals in Essex, indicative of wider attacks on clergy seen in East Anglia.

The Interregnum witnessed a clampdown on sexual behavior that was particularly harsh and often enforced. Thus, accusations of sexual misconduct by Conformist clergymen potentially destroyed their reputations in a period that sought unpolluted morality. The laws against sexual transgressions were undoubtedly more severe. Complicating the matter were Puritan justices throughout the country, eager to enforce the new codes at the slightest provocation – real or not. By 1655, when the presence of Major-General Frank Desborough in the county renewed fervor among the Godly, cases rose to slightly over thirty percent of all prosecutions. In Essex, accusers condemned vicar Richard Palmer before the local committee for having supposedly attempted the chastity of a woman. Palmer lost the case, as the wife of the churchwarden was his original accuser. However, Palmer’s case stands as a testament to the paranoia existing at the time. Found in the surviving ecclesiastical court depositions, there was little more behind the charge than a late-night

⁵⁹ John Rushworth, *Historical collections of hidden passages of state, weighty matters in law, remarkable proceedings in five Parliaments: beginning the sixteenth year of King* (London, 1659), iv, 58-9.

⁶⁰ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker fol. C7.

altercation between the two parties. Following a drinking session at the churchwarden's house, Palmer had called the woman a "whore." As a result, the Godly took the issue to extremes, seeking to curtail Palmer and set an example. After all, late-night drinking, and shouting slander against a parishioner, was hardly ideal behavior on the part of a Conformist clergyman.⁶¹ His case, and several others in similar veins, underlie the increasing anti-clericalism and moral fragility of the time, both in Essex and all of England.

5.4 Intellectual Undercurrents of Preservation

The Commons Committee for Scandalous Ministers, which investigated complaints against individual ministers from 1641 onwards, served as a rich source base for tracing Conformist ministers who were arrested or forced to share pulpits with Puritan lecturers. Specifically, the Committee for Plundered Ministers reveals the names of Conformist ministers who were ejected, even though the primary aim of the committee was to find new livings for the displaced Parliamentary clergy.⁶² Where Essex serves as an insightful window into how Conformists continued to defend the sacrament of the disestablished church, the county was also awash with attempts to champion both Church doctrine and the theological footprints of the Church. Thus, Conformists of Essex, extrapolated also in other eastern counties, strategized throughout the Interregnum to not only champion their own theological teachings but also critique their opponents, Puritan and Sectarian alike.

Foremost, Conformists sought to defend their Church by rejecting Puritan wisdoms concerning natural law. Such defenses infiltrated many political and religious discourses in Essex throughout 1640s and 1650s. The tenacity of these sermons amplified when Parliament enforced

⁶¹ LRO, 1 D 41/4, fol. XXV.

⁶² Ian Green, "The persecution of 'scandalous' and 'malignant' parish clergy during the English Civil War," *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979), 15.

policy directing the installation of rival lecturers in parishes. John Crosse, rector of the parish of Gosfield, for example, disrupted the Puritan lecturer, Mr. Wems, pulling open the pulpit door as he was praying.⁶³ Crosse disagreed with the prophetic warnings about the monarchy embedded in Wems's lecture, seeking to disrupt the blasphemy in an abrupt, but not particularly objectionable manner.⁶⁴ Indeed, many of the Conformist critiques of the Godly were often reactionary episodes. Criticisms were provoked by the onslaught of arguments by the Godly, further influencing policy. One particular aggravation was Thomas Edwards's catalogue of heresies and blasphemies. Edwards warned that Conformists would destroy both religion and morality. The fears he fanned led in May 1648 to a draconian ordinance against blasphemy, which laid down the death penalty for denying God, Christ's divinity, the resurrection, or heaven and hell.

For many of Edwards's Puritan contemporaries, the ensuing war was indeed a religious tussle, one which would fulfil spiritual purposes ultimately known only to God, but at least glimpsed by the Godly. The language of many sermons is filled with this critical sense of God's providence in the war and issues relating to natural law. This is conveyed in 1642, when Puritan William Sedgwick was warning that,

Israel's deliverance from Egypt was "long" and "difficult." The Hebrews, he asserted, had faced "stratagems, plots, taxations ... burthens ... changes and uncertainties ...and worst of all, Pharaoh raised armies against them." Even after "that great deliverance through the red sea, they were forty years in the wilderness, beset with many Wants. They grew "weary of their deliverance" and said: "Let us go back to Egypt."⁶⁵

Sedgwick was a fierce opponent to the Church of England, noted for his Puritan leanings and espousing of mystical hermeneutics. He spoke forcefully in favor of ecclesiastical discipline, which "we have not yet had leave to talk of." He recognized the objection that "episcopal

⁶³ BL, Add. 5,829, fol. 31.

⁶⁴ Thomas Edwards, *The first and second part of Gangraena, or, A catalogue and discovery of many of the errors, heresies, blasphemies and pernicious practices of the sectaries of this time* (1646).

⁶⁵ William Sedgwick, *Zions Deliverance* (1642), 6-7.

government suits best with a monarchy, and that which men would ground upon the Word is dangerous to monarchies.” His arguments regarding discipline were “political,” asserting Conformists were “but weak in divine things.”⁶⁶ Similar warnings were aired where Independent minister William Greenhill warned,

let not England: become a house of bondage, A Kingdome then lives and prospers when Religion and the Pure worship of God are maintained; this the Heathens themselves did know, that Religion and worship of their Gods was the only way to make a Kingdome flourish. Tullie in his Book [*de natura derum*] attributes the felicities, Empire and Triumph of the Romans.⁶⁷

Puritan opponents continued to steer the English towards their understanding of God. Such efforts were enacted from the pulpit in public sermons to local congregations.

In addition to addressing millenarianism, local ministers employed Exodus in their sermons and writings throughout the Interregnum. Conformist Edward Symmons complained of the Parliamentarians, “How often have they compared, the king, to Pharaoh.”⁶⁸ Symmons was distressed when Godly preachers in his parish conducted their sermons, proselytizing on natural law and lauding the works of Cromwell and his officials. Puritan John Brinsley the younger, for example, roused up support for Parliament by suggesting that though the Reformation had delivered the English from “Egyptian-Roman bondage,” they were now on the edge of the Red Sea, being pursued by Pharaoh. They must, he declared “stand fast ... choosing to die free-men than to live slaves.”⁶⁹ Moreover, while Puritan clergy carefully avoided any explicit identification of Charles I with the Egyptian tyrant, it was an analogy that listeners could draw for themselves. These Puritans were more outspoken in praising their military commanders for leading them out

⁶⁶ Sedgwick, *Zions Deliverance*, 9.

⁶⁷ William Greenhill, *The Axe at the Root* (London, 1643), 6.

⁶⁸ Edward Symmons, *Scripture Vindicated* (London, 1647), 84.

⁶⁹ John Brinsley, *Or, A bridle for the times A discourse tending to still the murmuring, to settle the wavering* (London, 1647), 59–60.

of slavery. The Earl of Essex, for instance, was hailed as “England’s Moses.”⁷⁰ In sum, the contesting nature of theology proved a prevalent cause of local provocation. Conformist clergymen refused to ignore the sermons of the Godly to their congregations, determining instead to battle with their own theological utterances. Without such attempts, Conformists feared that the Godly reforms would proceed throughout the county with the popular enthusiasm with which they had begun.

Two local intellectuals championing Conformity were William Chillingworth and Henry Hammond. Both men had a profound effect on Conformist clergymen in the shire.⁷¹ Conformist Chillingworth offered an appraisal of Parliamentary understanding of nature and grace, and saw that religion could be decoupled from natural law and used against the Parliamentarians. Chillingworth was a forthright Oxford academic of Anglican theological views, and believed in the superiority of the divine over any member of the body politic.⁷² He was also a staunch Royalist, and his vociferous support for Charles in Oxford soon provoked resentment. In 1638, he penned a short manuscript that would be employed by Conformists during the Interregnum years. Entitled, *Of the unlawfulness of resisting the lawfull Prince although most impious, tyrannical & Idolatrous*, the piece began by acknowledging “that Grace doth not destroy or correct but perfect nature,” but went to emphasize that the need to understand this relationship correctly. Parliamentarianism, Chillingworth felt, was “no better than Machiavellian copper,”⁷³ their scriptural claims were besmirched and corrupted because they were mixed with “self-interested realpolitik.” He rebutted

⁷⁰ William Prynne, *The Popish Royal Favourite* (London, 1643), sig. 2.r.

⁷¹ Faced with the need to counter these Puritan arguments, Conformist intellectuals offered a very different picture of natural law to their fellow Preservationists. They refused to accept that God would countenance Parliamentary resistance, and challenged the tradition of Protestant resistance theory, and in the process to reconsider the relationship between natural law and Christianity. Conformists also looked to divorce the traditional union of natural law and religious duty. They could draw on some hints they found in continental texts, particularly those from outside the Protestant tradition, but they did much of the intellectual work themselves. Geoffrey Rowell, *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 122-124.

⁷² William Chillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants: A Safe Way to Salvation* (London, 1638).

⁷³ LPL MS 943 f.895r.

by explaining that by combining private theological matters with public political interests, one was spiritually bankrupt, as to “pay all manner of Subjection and obedience, not only to lawful Princes, but to the most Impious infidel and Idolatrous Princes.” For Chillingworth, it was impossible to plead any other rule against this clear divine command. He concluded by penning, “lex nulla valeat contra jus divinum,” no law is valid against divine law. For him, Scripture provided an independent and superior standard of morality. One far greater than any temporal power.⁷⁴

Henry Hammond of contrastingly attacked Parliamentarians in his *Of resisting the lawful magistrate under the color of religion*, published in 1643 and then reissued early the next decade.⁷⁵ The Conformist churchman consistently viewed the Parliamentarians’ argument of sovereignty in religious terms, denouncing them for taking up arms on the pretext of zealous reformation. He held that violence could never promote Christianity, nor could it be used to defend resistance against the supreme magistrate. However, Hammond’s argument was broader than the title of his tract might imply, for he did not merely want to show that no one could take up arms against their sovereign for a religious cause.⁷⁶ Instead, he aimed to prove that Christ and the Apostles had forbidden their followers from making use of the individual right of self-defense or self-preservation against the magistrate. He accepted that this right might still be valid against a robber or a thief, but this was because the laws and magistrates give us the liberty to defend ourselves in these circumstances. The right could not be used against the supreme magistrate, however, for if he wrote, private men might have permission to resist or repel force with force, there will be tumults and commotions everywhere.⁷⁷ In other words, Hammond was arguing that the Apostles were astute civil philosophers as well as great religious leaders. For they realized that no society could ever be stable if people always appealed to their natural rights of self-defense.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Henry Hammond, *Of resisting the lawful magistrate under the color of religion* (London, 1643).

⁷⁶ Ibid, 10.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 11.

The dissemination and employment of such rational tracts throughout the Interregnum appealed to Conformists, like minister Robert Snell of Maching, who wished to exercise their natural rights against Parliament.⁷⁸ For them, they sought avoid extremes imposed by both Puritans and Catholics. The Bible appealed to Catholic through tradition, while Puritans regarded Scripture as the sole authority. Conformists evaded both extremes, insisting that a third element lay in human reason, which should be obeyed whenever both Scripture and tradition needed clarification or did not cover some new circumstance. When concerns of Church and State arose, as throughout the 1650s, Conformists advocated the principle of unity in order to preserve their Church. Such episodes demonstrate how preservation was not just a matter of protecting sacraments, but a much broader attempt to halt Puritan reforms via intellectual engagement and deliberation.

5.5 Conclusion

Religious life in Essex's Interregnum parish is one of contradiction, and historians, not surprisingly, have arrived at very different conclusions. Derek Hirst paints a bleak picture, viewing the preoccupation with catechizing from the mid-1650s as an admission of failure by the Puritan clergy.⁷⁹ Ann Hughes and Elliott Vernon take a more positive view. Vernon regarded catechizing as evidence of a vigorous evangelical spirit and dismisses Puritan gloom as little more than a conventional trope. As he notes, Puritans always felt themselves an embattled minority, fighting popery, superstition, and indifference.⁸⁰

In response to these arguments, the above discussion depicts Essex as a county in which Puritan influence began to wane towards the end of the Interregnum. Puritans had always

⁷⁸ Bodl., MSS. J. Walker fol. C7.

⁷⁹ Derek Hirst, "The Failure of Godly Rule in the English Republic," *Past & Present*, no. 132 (1991), 33-66.

⁸⁰ Elliot Vernon, "A Ministry of the Gospel: the Presbyterians during the English Revolution," in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, edited by Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby, 131-2; Ann Hughes, "The Public Profession of these Nations: The National Church in Interregnum England" in *Religion in Revolutionary England*, edited Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds.), 95-109.

condemned parish clergy unable to preach, dismissed as “dumb dogs,” and those whose lives discredited the gospel. Determined to root out both scandalous and malignant Conformist ministers, Parliament now invited disgruntled parishioners to lodge complaints. Many responded, and by the Interregnum, roughly 2300 ministers had been ejected. Most had served in the south and east of England, regions embodying Puritan and Parliamentary strength rather than that of clerical shortcomings. The consequence of these ejections is a robust archive of Preservationism in which Conformist clergy, embattled by both local and national pressure, strategized to preserve the Church. By examining the whereabouts of these ministers, a more transparent portrait of Essex’s religious landscape materializes.

A snapshot of Essex in 1659 depicts a fallen Puritan stronghold stemming from two causes. First, much of the Puritans’ despondency suggests disappointment that their long-awaited liberty had produced only limited results. For that, as some conceded, their own quarrels were partly to blame. Some recognized, too, that a diet of venomous sermons rendered preachers “hateful and abominable to the greatest part of their congregations.” Thomas Larkham, for instance, told his parishioners that most “would be damned, even the Godly,” and it is hardly surprising that he provoked deep resentment.⁸¹ Moreover, in 1654 Giles Firmin, back from New England, branded the old Puritan stronghold of Essex as “the deadest county in all the nation, gospel-glutted professors.” Second, as the Puritan cause splintered, new “heresies” continued to spread, and by the later 1650s, the burgeoning Quaker movement appeared an even more significant threat than the old bugbear of Conformist-inspired popery. The perseverance of Conformists added weight to the already massive pressures Puritans confronted by the closing months of Interregnum. Together,

⁸¹ Elkanah Wales, *Mount Ebal Levell’d* (London, 1659), 48–52; Thomas Larkham, *Wedding-Supper* (London: 1652), 250–253; Giles Firmin, *A Serious Question* (London: 1651), 34. See also John Spurr, *English Puritanism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 114–146.

both combined to form a toxic concoction that infected and weakened the formerly Puritan stronghold in East Anglia.

CONCLUSION

This study has provided an analysis of the Conformist community and the ways in which they sought to preserve their faith during the Interregnum by analyzing Conformist activity throughout four Puritanical counties in East Anglia: Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. Conformists sought to preserve their Church against a backdrop of ever tightening restrictive policies and the burgeoning religious opponents. Their instruments were not swords, but sermons performed in secret meetings. As this study has shown, many Conformists expressed their bliss at privately offering sacraments to their suppressed parishioners and were ardent in their expression of faith. Others, however, waited long years before having the satisfaction of making such announcements. Indeed, as Conformist John Hodges at Shakerstone in Leicestershire remarked,

Upon the Friday the 27th of November 1646, I, John Hodges, was forced from my vicarage for my zealous loyalty and affection to God, my King, and Country, and was restored the 27th of November 1660, by King Charles II, whom I beseech the Lord long to preserve.¹

The Church of England was never a monolith, often speaking with multiple voices. It accommodated a swirl of theological perspectives – Catholic, Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinist, Arminian. Conformists could be cautious or reckless, lazy or zealous, affable or angry. But, despite such an assortment, it was a spiritual community who were relentless in their pursuit of preservation. The system of unity in the Church depended on the willingness of churchwardens or incumbents to present offenders, of church court judges to pursue them, on the clergymen to protect their congregations and administer the sacraments, and on the parishioners to participate in Church services. Its objective, most often, was reconciliation rather than punishment, as shown

¹ Bodl., MSS J Walker, fol. C5.59.

in dozens of the case studies reconstructed here. Though capable of administering penalties, most Christian officers were averse to confrontation. Most acknowledged that insistence on full compliance with every law and rubric might be counter productive.² The Church of England, from the days of Richard Hooker to the ascent of Charles II, sought the conservation of harmony and moderation, or at least the framework and semblance of harmony.

A key component to this intrinsic framework was Richard Hooker. In the absence of a national church, Conformists turned to past church leaders whose works alleviated their anxieties. Hooker provided a careful interpretation and application of the various normative principles bearing on his situation as a Conformist divine. He debated the “laws” of God, the angels, and the nature of human well-doing, specifically the personal and social. Hooker’s position in the Church of England parallels that of Martin Luther in Lutheranism, John Calvin in Presbyterianism, and Thomas Aquinas in Roman Catholicism. Furthermore, Hooker was the most influential theologian in the aftermath of the English Reformation. His emphases on reason, tolerance, and the value of tradition had a lasting influence on the development of the Church of England. He took a position that was more inclusive, in the sense of tolerating a greater variety of opinion and accepted a mixture of practice in religious and state affairs. Perseverance was needed to overcome such hindrances, best performed in the form of religious practices. Only those with a resolute faith would endure troubling times instigated by intolerance like that seen in Cromwellian England.

The varied forms of Conformist preservation, whether through sermons or via print, during the Interregnum can never be reduced to a few neat categories. Yet by concentrating on some of their similarities and structures, this dissertation reveals that meaningful religious expression, in the comforts of community and private worship, were at least as important to contemporaries as political issues. This is not, of course, to imply that the clergy and laity failed to understand the

² David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 477.

complexities involved in the politics of religion, but simply to assert the inevitable connections of doctrine and factors of community. As the Civil Wars progressed, Conformists had to adapt their practices to the new political and religious environment surrounding them. This adaption facilitated the preservation of their disestablished Church. Indeed, for these Conformists faith was felt, but to some extent it was also learnt.

If studying the Conformist community of the 1650s compels us to rethink traditional assumptions concerning the vitality of Church of England, it further prompts us to question their role in the Restoration of 1660. Historians of the Restoration emphasize the role of religious toleration in the everyday lives of the English, but this project asserts that the roots of toleration were planted during the previous decade through various mechanisms. First is the issue of grievances. One such grievance held by the Preservationists was their inability to practice and worship their religion. The Cromwellian regime was unsympathetic to such grievances, but rather than suppressing attempts at private worship, the attempt developed a feedback loop whereby Preservationists became inflamed to a greater extent. As the Cromwellian government failed to respond to the grievances, repression backfired upon the regime, instigating revolution from below and behind closed doors.

But this was a different style of revolution. This was not the armed conflict synonymous with Civil War England, nor was it the “bloodless” revolution associated with the Glorious Revolution of 1688/89.³ Rather than being contested in the public sphere, a platform associated with polemics and bloodthirsty battles, it subsisted in the private realm where conventicles met in deep seclusion.⁴ Private manors and abandoned woodsheds replaced the unrestricted local

³ The “bloodless” nature of the Glorious Revolution is disputed. In *Radical Whigs and Conspiratorial Politics in Late Stuart England* (State College, Penn: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999) for instance, Melinda Zook argues that “if we take the entire decade of the 1680s into account, the Glorious Revolution begins to look less glorious, less smooth and bloodless, and more like modern revolutions.” xv.

⁴ See Peter Lake and Steve Pincus, “Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England,” *Journal of British Studies*, 45:2 (2006), 270-292. Both argue that the phrase, “public sphere,” does indeed have real efficacy in

monasteries and churches. Indeed, the displaced Presbyterians did not raise arms to revolt, but instead repudiated Puritan beliefs by continuing to adhere to the Church of England's practices. This was their revolutionary archetype. These efforts, in defiance of Cromwell's ordinances, facilitated the Restoration of 1660.

English society following the restoration of the monarchy was still in many respects what it had been in the reign of Elizabeth. It was an amalgamation of small-scale communities, based upon family households, and held together by bonds of cooperation between neighbors and kin and ties of patronage and reverence between superiors and inferiors. However, it was also a society that had been irreversibly altered. Local communities had been deeply penetrated by forces that both weakened their localism and gave a sharper edge to their patterns of social stratification. Sharper distinctions of education, religion, attitudes, beliefs, and manners had appeared to reinforce the polarizing effects of demographic and economic development. Intergroup disputes of interest had arisen which produced fiercer hostilities and demanded rehabilitation of social relations if they were to be defused. Amid transformation, Interregnum England was the catalyst to change, and the actions of Conformists represented the triumph of religious liberty over intolerance and suppression.

discussions of early modern England. Moreover, both scholars examined the interactions of print and manuscript and the relationship between what "really happened" and the stories people told about what was happening. Lake's and Pincus's placement of the notion of the public sphere allows one to give an account of religious conflict, embedded with theology, as a major motor for political conflict.

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